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ABSTRACT

This book offers 24 perspectives from educators, students, advocates, journalists, policymakers, and citizens on education reform and the importance of improving America's schools and school systems. Articles include the following: (1) "What Only a Governor Can Do" (Lamar Alexander); (2) "Governors and the National Education Goals" (Carroll A. Campbell, Jr.); (3) "The Touch of a Teacher" (Sharon M. Draper); (4) "We All Pay the Price of Children's Poverty" (Marian Wright Edelman); (5) "It Won't Fix Itself" (Chester E. Finn, Jr.); (6) "Getting Down in the Trenches" (Keith Geiger); (7) "Reforms That Failed and Reforms That Worked" (Ira Glass); (8) "Partners for Progress--Advocates for Change" (Joseph T. Gorman); (9) "Language Minority Students: Challenges and Promises" (Kenju Hakuta); (10) "Help Us Help Ourselves" (Darlene Hidalgo); (11) "A Demographer's View" (Harold L. Hodgkinson); (12) "Remembering 'The Forgotten Half'" (Harold Howe, II); (13) "Education Reform: Impertinent Issues and Pertinent Questions" (Sharon Lynn Kagan); (14) "Accepting Teachers as Experts" (Megan C. Lawson); (15) "Improving the Scientific Literacy of Teachers and Students" (Leon M. Lederman); (16) "Change in Public Schools" (Bertha O. Pendleton); (17) "Improving Education Performance" (Hilary Pennington); (18) "Making High School Count" (Lauren B. Resnick); (19) "The Challenge for New Governors: Leading Education Reform in the Late 1990s" (Richard W. Riley); (20) "Making Quality Count" (Roy Romer); (21) "The Public Looks at School Reform" (Albert Shanker); (22) "Up the Down Staircase" (Leila Sinclaire); (23) "Listening as a School Reform Strategy" (Deborah Wadsworth); and (24) "In Our Nation's Best Interest: Achieving Educational Excellence for Latinos" (Raul Yzaguirre). (LMI)

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EDUCATION REFORM

What Governors Need to Know About

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PERSPECTIVES

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What Governors Need to Know About Education Reform

Edited by Marla Higginbotham

Education Policy Studies Division

Center for Policy Research

National Governors' Association

Since their initial meeting in 1908 to discuss interstate water problems, the Governors have worked through the National Governors' Association to deal collectively with issues of public policy and governance. The association's ongoing mission is to support the work of the Governors by providing a bipartisan forum to help shape and implement national policy and to solve state problems.

The members of the National Governors' Association are the Governors of the fifty states, the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the Virgin Islands, and the commonwealths of the Northern Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico. The association has a nine-member Executive Committee and three standing committees — on Economic Development and Commerce, Human Resources, and Natural Resources. Through NGA's committees, the Governors examine and develop policy and address key state and national issues. Special task forces often are created to focus gubernatorial attention on federal legislation or on state-level issues.

The association works closely with the administration and Congress on state-federal policy issues through its offices in the Hall of the States in Washington, D.C. The association serves as a vehicle for sharing knowledge of innovative programs among the states and provides technical assistance and consultant services to Governors on a wide range of management and policy issues.

The Center for Policy Research is the research and development arm of NGA. The center is a vehicle for sharing knowledge about innovative state activities, exploring the impact of federal initiatives on state government, and providing technical assistance to states. The center works in a number of policy fields, including agriculture and rural development, economic development, education, energy and environment, health, information management, social services, trade, training and employment, and transportation. The priorities for the association's research are set by the Governors.

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Introduction

Governors have been at the forefront of education reform for more than a decade. In the mid-1980s, Governors issued a call for fundamental change in the education system. In the 1986 National Governors' Association (NGA) report *Time for Results,* Governors focused national attention on improved student achievement and performance. In 1989 the nation's Governors and President George Bush reached a joint agreement at the historic Education Summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, to restructure the education system with a continual commitment to a results-oriented system. To that end, the Governors and President Bush endorsed six ambitious National Education Goals to be achieved by the year 2000. As a part of the decade-long commitment to the goals, President Bill Clinton signed into law in 1994 the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, which codified the original six education goals along with two additional goals focused on teacher education and professional development and parental participation.

Today, education reform is at a critical juncture. This year is the mid-point between the adoption of the original six National Education Goals and the date for achieving these goals. Governors know firsthand that the quality and effectiveness of the education system is a key factor in the success of any effort to strengthen economic competitiveness. Today's world is constantly changing. To keep up with these changes, Governors must continue to listen and be willing to try new initiatives. This means ensuring that civic and business leaders, educators, and the public are involved in defining desirable outcomes for schooling and the changes necessary to achieve them.

The debate on education reform has been and will continue to be an evolving discussion. Everyone has their own expectations about what education should be. Parents want safe schools with high-quality programs, businesses leaders want qualified workers, teachers want professional support, and the list goes on.

What Governors Need to Know About Education Reform offers twenty-four perspectives from opinion leaders, educators, students, advocates, academics, journalists, policymakers, and citizens on education reform and the importance of improving America's schools and school systems.

These essays inform the debate and ask important questions, the answers to which will help shape the future for generations to come.

Lamar Alexander

Former U.S. Secretary of Education

Lamar Alexander lives in Nashville where he is counsel to the Baker, Donelson law firm. He has served as Governor of Tennessee, president of the University of Tennessee, and U.S. Secretary of Education. From 1985 to 1986, he chaired the National Governors' Association and launched its education survey Time for Results. The Education Commission of the States and the National Collegiate Athletic Association have given him their highest awards.

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What Only a Governor Can Do

To suggest what a Governor needs to know and be able to do to improve education performance, it is a good idea to first ask the general question, "What do Governors do anyway?"

There is not as much agreement about this as you might think. Some people think of the Governor as the head of state, visiting and smiling and receiving; or as the commander in chief; or as a lobbyist. Of course, the Governor is also a politician and a cheerleader.

I think the best Governors I have known are like Count Basie, who could sit down at the piano, tinkle a few notes, and help a group of musicians play more clearly and brilliantly than they ever had before.

Fundamentally, a Governor's job is to assess the state's most urgent needs, develop a strategy to meet those needs, and persuade at least half the people that he or she is right. To boil it down, a Governor's job is to set an agenda and make things happen. That is what a Governor does. No one else can do that for a state quite as well.

Any Governor who starts thinking about the state's most urgent needs quickly arrives at education. Better schools mean better jobs. A good education is the way to cope with today's changing world on one's own terms. Education is the surest ticket from the back to the front of the line, the way to grow the economy, balance the budget, lower the crime rate, and help children grow up healthy. Since at least the mid-1980s, when all of the Governors joined together for a year to focus solely on education through the National Governors' Association, it has been the first priority of almost every Governor.

Here are some other things a Governor needs to know and be able to do if education is the first priority.

- A Governor who picks a single fundamental issue, selects a strategy for dealing with the issue, and throws himself or herself into it for as long as he or she is there, usually can wear out everybody else

and succeed. For example, in 1983, after a battle that lasted a year and a half, Tennessee finally enacted the nation's only statewide program to pay teachers more for teaching well. The program is now in its tenth year.

- Your common sense is usually right even when those who claim to know more say you're wrong. You might ask, "Why don't we pay more for teaching well? Why don't we give parents choices of schools their children can attend? Why don't schools stay open after 3:00 p.m., when most families are working and no one is home to care for the children? Can't all children learn?" Your instincts would be right about all of these.

- Your second biggest obstacle to change: the teachers' union. The issue with the union is mainly control: who controls the schools, the assignment of pupils, the work rules, and the curriculum. Don't underestimate the union.

- Your biggest obstacle to change: all of us. The world has changed so much that most people do not understand the need for higher standards, break-the-mold schools, school choice, or year-round and all-day school hours (among which most parents may choose).

- Don't forget higher education. Good colleges and universities are every bit as important as good elementary and secondary schools. And because the Governor proposes the budget for the state share of higher education, you'll be surprised at how much respect your ideas receive from college officials.

- Your secret weapon for change: community colleges. They are low-cost, flexible, and convenient for most people. These are the marketplace educational institutions that deliver what serious adults need to live and work in today's world.

- Only the Governor can promote the kinds of changes that need to be made. Going at full blast—with a legislature, a business community, and some entrepreneurial educators behind you—you still may not get done what needs to be done. But change probably won't happen at all unless you as Governor take the lead.

- Your most powerful ally for change: the business community. This is because it had to go through the painful changes in the 1980s that schools need to go through in the 1990s. Business leadership is as important as business contributions.

- Your most important allies for change: entrepreneurial educators. They are in every school—usually a lot of them. These are the principals and teachers who know the children and are in the best position to help. Find them, include them, reward them, and give them a chance to succeed.

- Your single best strategy for change: charter schools. I like to call them independent public schools. Give a school a new charter. Agree on what the goals should be. Let those involved with the school decide what the strategies should be. Measure results, not inputs. Find a way to give them outside help as they need it (as with design teams from the New American Schools Development Corporation), but step back and let them have time to succeed. Existing schools can be charter schools. So, too, can new schools be created by, I believe, anybody the school board believes is responsible: colleges, museums, or private corporations. Thousands of newly chartered schools would show America what we need to do. In the end, of course, we would have many different kinds of schools, meeting the needs of America's many different kinds of children. Parents would then choose among the schools and the taxpayer money would follow the child to the charter school the parent thinks best fits the child.

Carroll A. Campbell Jr.
Former Governor of South Carolina

Governor Carroll A. Campbell Jr. is a Republican from South Carolina. He co-chaired the National Governors' Association's Task Force on Education from 1989 to 1990. He served on the National Education Goals Panel from its inception in 1990 through 1993, and chaired the panel in 1991-92. He served as co-chairman of the National Council on Education Standards and Testing in 1991 and chaired the National Governors' Association in 1993-94. Campbell completed eight years as Governor in January 1995. He currently serves as president and chief executive officer of the American Council of Life Insurance, a trade association based in Washington, D.C.

Governors and the National Education Goals

When the nation's Governors embarked upon the National Education Goals process in 1989, it was because collectively we believed certain things about education reform. We believed that we needed to focus first and foremost on results—on the level of achievement that comes out of the system and not on the level of resources going into it. And we all agreed that we were willing to give schools a high degree of flexibility and freedom if they could show us the results we wanted to see.

We believed that we do children a terrible disservice if we fail to challenge them to be the best. Nobody wins medals for mediocrity. Yet we hand out diplomas for it all the time and then send our high school graduates out into a work world where the standards are now so demanding that many of them can't even make it through the door.

Finally, we believed that the schools could not be the only focal point of our attention in education reform. Learning begins at birth and continues throughout life; the system must be lifelong.

These are the principles from which we started. Most of them have survived more or less intact in the six years since we embarked on this adventure, though the battles over some principles have been hard-fought. There are still those who believe that states (and the schools and communities they represent) will never embrace reforms along these lines except through federal coercion, such as the threatened loss of their federal funds. But most of the nation's Governors—both Democrats and Republicans—reject that view. The Governors stand overwhelmingly for the preeminent role of states, communities, individual schools, and parents. Many of them are proving just how powerful voluntary reform can be.

When he took over as chair of the National Governor's Association (NGA) in the summer of 1989, Republican Governor Terry E. Branstad of Iowa included an education plank in his Consensus for Change agenda. He asked then-Governor Bill Clinton and me to

co-chair an NGA task force charged with setting national goals for American education. At that time, President George Bush also announced his intention to call together the nation's Governors for a summit meeting. The sole topic was education.

In late September 1989, Hurricane Hugo struck South Carolina. The state was devastated; lives were lost and the property damage was staggering. Yet barely more than a week later, I traveled to Charlottesville, Virginia, for the historic Education Summit convened by President Bush and the nation's Governors. I did so, even in the face of the terrible needs at home, because the work we were embarking on in Charlottesville—to remake education in this century—seemed to me to be nearly as urgent and critical a recovery effort as the hurricane cleanup. Both would impact the future of my state; both would help shape its economy. It was a mission no Governor could afford to ignore.

In Charlottesville, President Bush and forty-nine Governors reached agreement. We would set and be bound by ambitious National Education Goals that would challenge every learner in America to new, higher levels of performance. Moreover, we agreed that the Governors and the President would take responsibility for seeing that progress toward the goals would be measured. Finally, we agreed to be accountable, ourselves, for the success or failure of the effort.

Based on these principles, the NGA task force went back to work to flesh out the goals. The task force held hearings and consulted with experts and practitioners. Many Governors held education summits in their own states. By early 1990, we agreed on six performance goals and twenty-one objectives related to them. The six goals, which were explicitly endorsed by the nation's Governors and the President, state that by the year 2000, the following would have been achieved.

Goal 1: All children in America will start school ready to learn.

Goal 2: The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

Goal 3: American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.

Goal 4: U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.

Goal 5: Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Goal 6: Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

Once the goals were in place, the Governors turned to the question of how best to monitor national progress. Given that the task force co-chairs were from Arkansas and South Carolina—both smaller, poorer, more demographically diverse states with histories of comparing unfavorably on nationally standardized tests—it is not surprising that we wanted to look beyond the simple "wall-chart" mentality that pitted state against state without regard to underlying causes. Instead, we looked for a process that would measure performance against high national standards and focus on a state's improvement from year to year.

Governors were adamant that the goals process not be federalized. We felt strongly about maintaining a strong state influence over the process. We also believed that we needed a politically accountable process that would be responsive to public concern in the event of untoward federal intrusion.

To carry out these functions, the National Education Goals Panel was created. The panel, an unprecedented bipartisan association of Governors, senior administration officials, and congressional representatives to which state legislators were later added, was charged with monitoring and reporting annually to the American people on the progress made by the nation and each individual state toward achieving the education goals.

In my opinion, the goals process would have faltered by now if the goals panel had been configured differently. Its membership represents the range of political opinion in America, and its decisions are respectful of concerns on both the right and the left. Yet the fact that the members are policymakers who are used to making tough calls enables the panel to take some politically risky, yet eminently sensible, positions. The panel has been the driving force toward high national academic standards; an important contributor to the debate on how best to measure the readiness of young children for school; a strong supporter of the National Assessment of

Educational Progress, which tells us in the aggregate how America's students are performing; a promoter of the need to assess what students learn in college; and a consistent voice for the importance of placing emphasis on educational performance, not simply on dollars or other inputs. Its decisions have not always been popular, but they have generally been forward-thinking and wise.

The goals panel will issue its fifth annual report in September 1995, on the anniversary of the Education Summit. The panel has now been authorized and expanded by Congress, which has somewhat redefined its role. This has made its future secure; time will tell what the changes will do to the panel's relevance and courage.

Sharon M. Draper
High School English Teacher

Sharon Draper lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she has spent twenty-three years teaching junior high and high school students how to appreciate the beauty of literature and how to communicate their ideas effectively. She currently heads the English department at Walnut Hills High School.

She is the author of Tears of a Tiger *(Atheneum of Macmillan, 1994) and* Ziggy and the Black Dinosaurs *(Just Us Books, 1994), and she has had numerous poems and short stories published in a variety of literary magazines.*

She has been a strong, active supporter of and participant in the activities, goals, and ideals of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, speaking nationally as a representative for certification candidates and as an advocate of the National Board.

The Touch of a Teacher

Our existence is defined through a series of patterns. Winter's anger is softened by spring, which blooms into the fire of summer. Autumn's glory and despair is forgotten with the wrath of winter once again. Historically and traditionally, the end of the bright freedom of summer marks the beginning of a new school year. Freshly waxed hallways gleaming with expectation and promise and smelling of chalk dust and challenges fade into classroom routines and repetitious rhythms. Young minds, like the buds of spring, sprout and bloom with the acquired knowledge of another year, only to return with the fading of the leaves to repeat the cycle once again.

The one constant in this continuum is the teacher, who imparts the wisdom of the past along with the news of the day. Immutable, the teacher guides, instructs, and encourages the continuous and ever-changing mirage of young faces. It is the warmth and wisdom of the teacher that will make a difference in the students' lives. It is the constancy and consistency of the presence of the teacher around which the educational cycle revolves.

Just as Plato instructed Aristotle, who taught countless others, the cycle of repeated learning and imparted wisdom is the educators' burden and their joy to continue. The knowledge of the past has been given to us and we, as modern griots, must not only remember the acquired knowledge of past generations, but also provide for its perpetuity for those as yet unborn.

Each generation benefits from the knowledge of the past. However, society must grow with the volume of information; no longer will the simple repetition of patterns be sufficient. The body of new information increases exponentially with each succeeding group of learners; therefore, the responsibility of the instructor becomes greater.

An infinite amount of knowledge exists in the universe, and modern civilization is approaching the capability of touching the edges of enlightenment. Our system of instruction and comprehension

must be refined in order to maximize that which is imparted to the next generation. Information not yet imagined will influence generations of teachers and learners still to come. Our definitions and interpretation of instruction and education will need to be adjusted, but some realities will remain constant.

For education to occur, there must be a learner, a guider of instruction, and an effective delivery system. This could be accomplished in a traditional classroom with thirty students listening to a teacher in a three-story brick school building. But education also happens in homeless shelters, hospital wards, computer labs, business offices, and parking lots. Education sings in hallways as well as in auditoriums, and dances in small rural cottages as well as in gleaming city edifices. Education soars when one child and one teacher make the connection between the unknown and the known.

We begin life with a *tabula rasa*, which is then gradually shaded by the colors of our education and experience. It is the teacher who decorates our lives with knowledge. It is a teacher who cheers when the first sentence is mastered, who encourages when long division is difficult, who smiles gently at a first attempt at poetry, and who challenges when a new idea from literature is questioned. Never truly appreciated or acknowledged, the teacher is the silent witness to all our educational accomplishments.

Four hundred years ago someone taught Shakespeare to love the language and to make it sing through the ages. Lincoln, Thoreau, King, Sandburg—all had a teacher who prepared the vision and gave them the courage to fly to its heights. What unknown heroes and artists cower in the darkness, untouched and uninspired? What moment of magic will change their darkness into luminescence?

Magic ceases to exist in a world of reality. Metaphors are lovely, but they fail to convey the harsh reality of overcrowded classrooms, bankrupted budgets, political apathy, and increased social responsibility. Teachers struggle to reach lofty goals, to reach the needs of the students, or merely to reach the end of the day. Very little recognition or reward is given for a job on which rests the knowledge of the past, the responsibility of the present, and the hope of the future.

The intrinsic worth of any aspect of modern society is determined through the extrinsic designation of financial value. Sports heroes and entertainment personalities, who provide merely social and recreational release, are willingly and cheerfully paid

multimillion-dollar salaries, while teachers, without whom society would be unable to progress intellectually, are given a pittance, and are expected to appreciate it. A civilization that honors athletes over intellectuals, that lauds entertainment while denigrating education, and that philosophically separates teachers from the ranks of professionals is a society in danger of destruction.

If they are to be what we have asked them to be, teachers must be respected as individuals, scholars, and professionals. They need to be respected as competent in decisionmaking as well as in instruction. They should be honored for their accomplishments and rewarded, both professionally and financially, for succeeding in a task that takes skill, dedication, and intelligence. Teachers need a support system that is nurturing rather than antagonistic. Teachers must not be taken for granted as worthless bits of pedagogical insignificance, but rather celebrated for moving civilization from ignorance to enlightenment.

The next century will bring discoveries as yet undreamed. Students must be prepared to become scholars of the universe and will need teachers who can provide them with a memory of the past as well as a vision for the future. Those teachers will need to be learners as well, to grow professionally and expand in a world of education that will become increasingly specific and technological. If the best young minds of today are not encouraged to become the educators of tomorrow, then who will teach the children of the twenty-first century? And if a system of financial support, social recognition, and professional development does not exist for those who choose to accept the awesome task of teaching, the education system will fail, and with it will fail civilization's chances of success. This might sound like a spurious overstatement, but until education becomes the priority of government, rather than of secondary significance, society will continue to suffer. Education of the populace and recognition of its educators is a matter of cultural and political necessity.

A child, unlike any other, yet like all those who have preceded and all who will follow, sits in a classroom today—hopeful, enthusiastic, and curious. In that child sleeps the vision and the wisdom of the ages. The touch of a teacher will make the difference.

Marian Wright Edelman

Children's Advocate

Marian Wright Edelman is the founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF). Under her leadership, the Washington, based CDF has become a strong national voice for children and families. CDF's mission is to educate the nation about the needs of children and to encourage preventive investment in children before they get sick, drop out of school, suffer a too-early pregnancy or family breakdown, or get into trouble. On the eve of a new century and millennium, CDF seeks to ensure that no child is left behind and that every child has a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, and a safe start in life with the support of caring parents and communities.

A graduate of Spelman College and Yale Law School, Edelman began her career in the mid-1960s when, as the first black woman admitted to the Mississippi Bar, she directed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense and Educational Fund office in Jackson, Mississippi. In 1968 she moved to Washington, D.C., as counsel for the Poor People's March that Martin Luther King Jr. began organizing before his death. She founded the Washington Research Project, a public interest law firm and the parent body of the Children's Defense Fund.

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We All Pay the Price of Children's Poverty

The children attending America's schools today will need to write and think clearly and understand math to be effective workers, parents, and citizens in the next century. They will need greater academic skills than any preceding generation of Americans. Yet far too many disadvantaged students are leaving school ill-prepared for today's and tomorrow's world. Unless corrective action is taken, warned the business-led Committee for Economic Development in 1987, "our industries will be unable to grow and compete because an expanding educational underclass will be unable to meet the demands" of new jobs in a changing economy.

Shamefully high child poverty rates help fuel the problem. In every state in the nation—in rural, suburban, and urban communities—tens of thousands of children each year experience deep financial poverty that destroys learning by threatening their health, sapping their hope, and shrinking their horizons.

The more time children spend in poverty, the worse their educational outcomes from preschool to college, according to a growing body of research.

- The U.S. Department of Education reported in 1986 that the risk of a student falling behind in school increases by two percentage points for every year he or she spends growing up in poverty. Poverty's effects are separate from—and stronger than—the effects of having a single parent or a teen parent, being black, or living in the South, according to the study.
- "Family income is a far more powerful correlate of a child's IQ at age five than maternal education, ethnicity, and growing up in a single-parent family," according to a 1994 study of long-term poverty by University of Michigan researcher Greg Duncan and his colleagues.
- Long-term poverty had strong effects on child test scores that were independent of the race or characteristics of the mother such as basic skill scores, marital status, years of education, age when giving

birth, or smoking or drinking habits, according to University of Minnesota researcher Sanders Korenman and his colleagues.

- More generous public assistance seems to help, not hurt. Children in single-mother homes finish more years of schooling in states that offer more adequate Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) payments and finish less schooling in less generous states, according to University of Iowa researcher Amy C. Butler. (Butler also searched for signs that this pattern is merely coincidental. For example, she looked for evidence that children not on AFDC also complete more education in high-benefit states because of better schools, higher expectations, or other reasons unrelated to the beneficial effects of AFDC, but she found no such signs.)

We have always known that poverty robs children of opportunity and threatens their education. Now, for the first time, we have evidence of how poverty's effects on education translate into enormous economic costs to business and society.

- Every single year that we allow so many of our children to be so poor will result in lower educational attainment that is expected to cost the economy between $36 billion and $99 billion in reduced future output per hour of work, when these children grow up to become less educated, less effective workers.
- Counting lower lifetime work hours, as well as productivity lost for reasons unrelated to education, the projected effects of each year of child poverty reach as high as $177 billion.
- These staggering figures do not even count the costs of special education, repeated years of schooling, teen pregnancy, foster care, crime, chronic disability, and other social ills resulting from child poverty.

These estimates come from the Children's Defense Fund's new report on the costs of child poverty *Wasting America's Future*. They were calculated under the supervision of leading economists, including Nobel-prize-winning MIT economist Robert M. Solow.

The damage done by poverty does not "let schools off the hook," for schools from Los Angeles to New Haven have shown that it is possible to beat the tough odds of poverty through appropriate teaching methods. Many poor children do succeed despite the worst odds, precisely because there are good schools and caring teachers and strong families and mentors helping them battle

against poverty's effects. Yet no teacher who has worked in the midst of poverty doubts that we must also *change the odds* for poor children if they are to have a fair start in life.

Unless we change the harsh and immoral odds stacked against poor children, they will continue to be more likely to fall behind, not only in school but in virtually every aspect of their lives. According to public health studies in Kansas and Maine, low-income children in those states are three times more likely to die in childhood than are higher income children. Low-income children are two or more times as likely to suffer from stunted growth, severe physical or mental disabilities, fatal accidental injuries, fair or poor health status, iron deficiency, and severe asthma. They miss 36 percent more school days—nearly two extra days per child per school year—because of ill health.

The most important step each of us can take is to believe that child poverty can and must be eliminated in our rich, democratic society. If there is anything I believe in the depths of my heart, it is that Americans have the means to prevent child deprivation through strong leadership, moral commitment, a reordering of national investment priorities, and a transformation of our values.

Although it is fashionable to assert that government cannot solve everything, and it certainly cannot and should not be asked to solve everything, it is also false to say government can do nothing. The only way we ever have broken the back of any major social problem in this country has been to bring individuals, families, communities, the private sector, and government together to work toward lasting change.

Other nations of comparable wealth have far lower rates of child poverty. The United States can follow a similar path by reducing family poverty through direct job creation, supplements to low wages, affordable child care that enables mothers to work, increases in the minimum wage, a national system of child support enforcement and assurance, and real welfare reform. Real welfare reform means leaving children better off, not worse off, and continuing to offer support to low-income parents who seek to work or be married, rather than penalizing them for it, as do current AFDC rules. Real reform means supporting and rewarding families that do what's right; it doesn't mean cutting all aid to families willing to work hard and play by the rules, as the "Contract With America" would do. America does not stand for denying help to an otherwise destitute mother and child. If all we do is cut the safety net,

as some in the newly elected Congress seem ready to do, then we will only make poor children, and the nation's economic future, even poorer.

To succeed in school, children need many things. They need challenging curricula, strong and inclusive school governance, and plenty of encouragement and high expectations by teachers. Outside the school, children need attentive and loving parents, a nurturing community, safe streets, and strong values. They need health care that's reliable and good quality child care that's affordable. But they also need an adequate family income.

We can no longer ignore the destructive force of poverty. For all children to succeed, we must change the economic circumstances in which too many of our children live. It will cost money to end child poverty, but I know without a doubt that individually and collectively we will be richer for having done so.

Chester E. Finn Jr.
Education Analyst

In September 1994 Chester E. Finn Jr. became a John M. Olin Fellow at the Hudson Institute, where he cochairs the Educational Excellence Network and directs the American Dream project with former Tennessee Governor Lamar Alexander. He also continues to serve the Edison Project, where he has worked since 1992 as founding partner and director of government relations. He is on leave from the faculty of Vanderbilt University, where he has been professor of education and public policy since 1981.

Finn has made his career in education and government service. He has served as staff assistant to the President of the United States; special assistant to the Governor of Massachusetts; counselor to the American ambassador to India; research associate in governmental studies at The Brookings Institution; and legislative director for Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. He served as assistant secretary for research and improvement and counselor to the secretary of the U.S. Department of Education from 1985 to 1988.

He is the author of nine books; the most recent are Radical Education Reforms, *coedited with Herbert J. Walberg;* Education Reform in the '90's, *coedited with Theodor Rebarber; and* We Must Take Charge: Our Schools and Our Future.

It Won't Fix Itself

If one were setting out to design a system that would work badly, one might try this. Take an antiquated design and turn it over to a government monopoly to install everywhere. Make sure there are no specific goals or standards for the venture, no performance benchmarks, no valid comparisons of the various parts of the system, and absolutely no accountability for results. Put the system's employees in charge of all key decisions about how it will operate so that they can make certain their own interests are served. Guarantee them lifetime employment without regard to performance. Deny the "consumers" any influence over what the system does and, especially, block all avenues of escape from its monopoly. Blame any shortcomings on circumstances beyond the system's control and provide an annual increase in resources. Denounce—as misguided, unfair, invalid, etc.—all efforts to evaluate the system or compare it with those in other lands.

That paragraph might describe the Soviet economy of a few years back. Or it might describe American public education today. Is it any wonder that the results aren't satisfactory?

That's the backdrop against which any serious state-level education reform strategy must be formulated. In the paragraphs that follow, I first lay out five axioms about the school reform endeavor. Then I list what I take to be the six vital elements of a serious reform strategy. Be warned that the strategy is radical. Those seeking incrementalism (or avoiding political waves) may not want to continue reading.

Axioms of Education Reform

1. The education system is malfunctioning badly. Despite a few Pangloss-types who make their living by arguing that all is basically well with K-12 schooling—and others who claim that whatever's wrong is caused by bad parents, television, skinflint Republicans, etc.—evidence abounds that our children are not learning nearly enough for the kind of society we live in and the kind of economy

we need. That's true even of middle-class kids from stable families living in leafy suburbs, though they're less apt to know it.

2. The system cannot fix itself. It cannot even take responsibility for itself. Vast, sprawling, decentralized, and gummed up by brain-dead bureaucracies, potent (and reactionary) unions, blurred chains of command, and lots of trendy schemes and goofy ideas, American K-12 education today is incapable of transforming itself on a large scale. (Although there are occasional terrific schools.) It will change only in response to pressure.

3. There are no silver bullets. No one reform alone will do what's needed. Whether we're talking about "vouchers," "charters," "privatization," "systemic reform," "coalition schools," "site management," "staff development," "standards," or whatever, there's no panacea. Serious school reform has a number of essential elements.

4. Uncle Sam cannot fix it. Despite recent rhetoric from Washington, D.C., the federal role in school reform is proportional to Uncle Sam's share of the school dollar (about six cents). Moreover, interest group politics and "P.C." pressures in Washington, D.C., are such that federal programs are often dysfunctional. "Goals 2000" and "H.R. 6" will make things worse.

5. The American people have a lot of common sense about all this. Surveys make plain that they want a safe environment, high standards, effective instruction, caring teachers, an emphasis on the basics, efficient management, intelligible test scores, the ability to choose among alternatives, and accountability for results. They don't cotton to trendy reform schemes beloved by educators. If there's a problem with "the people" as allies in transforming American education, it's the difficulty of visualizing any kind of school other than the one they attended way back and the well-known tendency to believe that their own child's school is largely immune from the problems of education in general.

Six Keys to Real Reform

Power Shifting. Far more decisions, authority, and control over resources should move from producers to consumers and from experts to civilians. That means cracking the establishment monopoly by giving parents, voters, taxpayers, elected officials, and community leaders greater say over what schools must accomplish, how they will be held accountable for doing this, and how children and schools will be matched to one another. The professionals should retain responsibility and gain greater authority for decisions about

the means of education, but the laity needs to determine its ends. And those ends must, above all, serve the interest of consumers, not providers. This shift of attitude, priority, and authority is prerequisite for all else.

Standards. Any well-functioning enterprise starts with clarity about its expectations. Serious education reform begins by spelling out what properly educated young Americans will know and be able to do if the schools do their job successfully. At a minimum, this means ambitious high school graduation standards that consist of demonstrable skills and knowledge, not courses taken or time spent in class. These must be supported by synchronized standards at several checkpoints along the way.

The national goals and emerging national standards may be helpful, but it's not essential to buy into them or into "Goals 2000." States can develop their own. So can individual communities. The hard part, today, is to avoid fighting over "outcomes-based education." This is best done by confining mandatory standards to a core of basic skills and knowledge developed under strict "civilian control" and by embracing the rest of the reform agenda set forth below, including lots of choices for families.

Accountability. For standards to have a real impact, we need good tests of student and school performance, sound information about how we're doing, and real stakes and consequences for everyone involved.

A true accountability system includes exams that mirror the standards of the state or community; a blend of teacher-designed assessments and external tests, prepared and administered—like an independent audit—by people other than system managers; speed, intelligibility, and comparability of test results; and other plausible gauges of success, such as attendance, graduation rates, and discipline problems.

For all this actually to move youngsters, teachers, and principals to do better work, consequences—both the welcome kind and sterner interventions—must be tied to those gauges.

Supply-side Pluralism. Outside a common core of skills and knowledge, schools should vary along other dimensions: curriculum, pedagogy, climate, calendar, hours, internal organization, etc. Let them vie with one another on the basis of their distinctive features and do all they can to attract and retain their "clients." We should also encourage diverse "proprietors" to create and manage schools.

The "charter school" movement, already well begun in ten states, points the way. So does private management. What these schemes have in common is nothing less (or more) than redefining the "public school"—not as an institution administered in uniform fashion by a government agency, but rather as a school that serves the public, is open to the public, accepts the core "standards" adopted by its state or community, and agrees to be accountable for its results.

Demand-side Choice. School choice is no panacea but it is the essential lubricant of education reform. Families must be able to select their schools from among all available offerings. They must have the right to change schools when they feel the need. And the array of schools from which they may select should be as varied as possible, including private schools and—if no conventional school suits them—teaching their children at home. Many details must be worked out as education shifts from monopoly-and-coercion to pluralism-and-choice. It's a profound change. But details are details. First we need to accept the underlying principle.

Professionalism. No school is better than the people who work in it. Great educators are a precious asset. They should be treated as professionals and expected to conduct themselves that way.

Professionalism includes ceding to individual schools a wide array of decisions, finding outstanding educators in many places, equipping them with the necessary tools, compensating them on the basis of performance, and holding them accountable for their results.

None of these steps is easy to take. Implementing all six together is a vast undertaking. But nothing's more important to our future.

Keith Geiger
Union President

Keith Geiger is president of the 2.1 million member National Education Association (NEA), the nation's largest professional organization and labor union.

During his thirty year career in education, Geiger has distinguished himself in numerous professional, political, legislative, and labor activities at the local, state, and national level.

A high school mathematics and science teacher and a former president of the Michigan Education Association, Geiger began his leadership career as president of his local NEA affiliate, the Livonia Education Association. He served as vice president of NEA for six years before his election as president in July 1989.

Getting Down in the Trenches

Virtually no individual in our society has a greater potential to influence public schools than a Governor. States provide the lion's share of resources for education, they determine the greatest share of policies that govern the schools, and they have the greatest capacity for setting the tone about what can and should be done in education and other aspects of community life.

Teachers, administrators, parents, and others working at the local level have made dramatic impacts on individual schools. Governors can do more than any other single entity to bring about substantive school improvement in all schools. Yet the challenges remain. In fact, the challenges for many new Governors are greater than ever before. Resources are scarce, and competing demands for those resources are great. The societal influences that shape schools and communities have not made the mission of the schools easier. Those working in the public schools applaud the commitment of Governors willing to help address these challenges. We invite you to join with us in the perpetual effort to bring about better educational and economic opportunity for all students in the public schools.

For more than a decade, those committed to school improvement have been deluged by an endless series of reports and pronouncements on education. It's difficult to sort through them all, and it's even harder to resist the impulse to reject all that's gone before and strike out on one's own, issuing new reports, findings, and studies complete with one's own set of recommendations. So instead of outlining the National Education Association's prescription for school improvement, let me suggest, for now, some ways of looking at the issue.

Look at needs first, then solutions. Virtually all education decisions are political decisions, or at least they are made in a political environment. Whether it's a battle in the legislature or a matter before the school board or a faculty committee, most education decisions are made after some type of campaign, large or small. One person

or group proposes a solution—a longer school day or school year, expanded school enrollment options, cross-disciplinary higher order thinking, or problemsolving, or whatever—and then people line up on one side or the other vis-à-vis the solution. Over the course of the struggle, it's often forgotten specifically what problem the solution was designed to address. At the state and local levels, stakeholders ought to spend time identifying and agreeing on what the key needs are in public schools. It's much easier to reach consensus on what issues deserve attention first, and then have a discussion about which proposed solutions actually address the most critical needs.

Spend some time finding out more about what's going on in today's public schools. Many people tend to judge the condition of public education on secondhand information. More often than not, statistics and averages tend to cloud reality more than illuminate it. Blue-ribbon commission reports and academic studies have little to do with most people's attitudes or knowledge about the public schools. Most people get their impressions from headlines or stories half heard on the evening news. We draw contrasts between what we think students are learning today versus an idyllic notion about what schools were like when we were a child without adequate firsthand knowledge about what's different—both in terms of issues schools face that weren't a problem when we were young and what's exciting and challenging about the curriculum and technology of today. As a Governor, you will spend a tremendous amount of time involved in education decisions whether or not you choose to. It would be worthwhile to make those decisions based on firsthand knowledge of diverse schools and communities.

Don't try to solve every problem at once. Governors are in a unique position to bring about real, systemic education changes that cut across every community in the state. But don't foist a statewide solution on every community. Most Americans agree on certain core needs in America's public schools—raising standards, ceding more authority to the local level, and coordinating efforts among schools, related agencies, families, and communities. State government can and should do what it can do best to address these needs, but state leaders must have the wisdom to give the resources and flexibility to local schools to solve local problems.

Look at what has been done in your own state and other states for successful models of school improvement. Determine what the common elements of successful efforts have been in school reform up to now.

I expect that you'll find that those with demonstrable success have concentrated on early childhood education, coordinated programs that are child-centered and that engage parents, and put resources in programs to ensure their effectiveness. Don't forget that you can also learn from unsuccessful models. In your explorations, get different perspectives on what made a difference—talk with those in government, those who teach, and the beneficiaries of school reform (i.e., the students).

Start with changes you can make in areas where there is a clear need. Once you have worked with a number of stakeholders to find agreement on the needs and have worked through the process of agreeing on effective solutions, you can then narrow your agenda to those areas where state government can make a difference. After that, your course should become easier, and there will be room to imprint your own leadership and challenge the status quo.

Whatever course of action you intend to take, I urge you to involve state association leaders in both planning and implementation. The National Education Association and its affiliates welcome change. Many of the things that frustrate parents and politicians are even more frustrating to those working in the schools. Those who are interested in making schools better should visit the schools to discover what's right and what's wrong with public education today. We strongly support the long-standing American tradition of local autonomy for public schools. Parents, teachers, and other school officials should be constantly engaged in reinventing the schools. Together, we can meet the challenge of making schools better today so that America can be better tomorrow.

Ira Glass

Radio Correspondent

Ira Glass is a correspondent for the Chicago bureau of National Public Radio (NPR). He has done several major series on schools and education reform. His education reporting has prompted calls from educators around the country.

Glass has worked for NPR for seventeen years, starting when he was nineteen years old. He has worked on nearly every NPR news program and has done virtually every production job in NPR's Washington headquarters. In 1988 Glass was named as one of a handful of "Young Journalists of the Year" by the Livingston Foundation.

He edits a weekly, local radio program in Chicago that defies easy description. He recently was awarded a $150,000 grant from the MacArthur Foundation to begin a new weekly, national radio show.

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Reforms That Failed and Reforms That Worked

For the last year and a half, I've reported for National Public Radio on schools undergoing reform in the Chicago school system. It's been an unusual assignment. I have the time to get to know the teachers and students at the schools I visit—enough time to separate the hype about school reform from the substance. I spent all of last year following one high school, Taft High School, as the staff tried most of the trendiest ideas in education. Nothing worked. Test scores dropped. Attendance fell. This year I've spent most of my time at an elementary school, Washington Irving Elementary, where the staff has been much more successful. Scores are rising. The mood is buoyant. What follows are a few observations about what seems to work and what doesn't among the various schemes for fixing and improving public schools.

Real School Improvement vs. Window Dressing

You can divide school reform schemes into two general sorts: the kind that changes everyday classroom teaching and the kind that doesn't. It's important to distinguish the two, and this is rarely done at the state policy level.

In five years of Chicago school reform, most schools have not tried to change everyday teaching. They've added special after-school tutoring and extra Head Start classes. They've brought in new computers and better science lab equipment. They've enlisted parents as teacher aides. But the actual lessons that are taught in most of the classes at most of these schools are the most traditional kinds of classes. You remember the type: read a chapter from the textbook, then answer the questions at the end.

As teachers will tell you, these types of lessons aren't effective with kids who don't care about learning. I asked one junior at Taft High School what his teacher could do to make him complete more homework. "Seriously, I have no clue," he said. "It's not what he could do, it's what I could do. It's because I'm lazy when it comes to school, real lazy." It isn't just that large numbers of students cut

class and don't do their homework. It's that they don't seem apologetic about it. They're not sorry. They shrug it off.

This is one of the biggest challenges facing teachers today—making students want to learn. Making them care if they pass or not.

In most of the schools I visit, when a teacher assigns homework, only a third of the class turns in the assignment the next day. And so teachers send students on a forced march through the curriculum during class time. At Taft High School, teachers knew that kids wouldn't read at home, so they had the kids do their reading in class, aloud. Often, teachers read to them.

There's an arsenal of techniques people are trying around the country to reach more of these students. All of them basically boil down to ways to make the students more active during class (e.g., hands-on learning in math and science and "whole-language" approaches to reading and math). A number of Chicago schools require every student to write in a journal every day. The idea is to give them practice in writing by having them write about things that are important to them, to get them used to writing, and to get them to like writing. At Washington Irving Elementary School, there are no vocabulary tests, no grammar drills, no "read the chapter and answer the questions in the back" lessons. Instead, the students are required to find books they like and to read. Eighth graders are required to read at least 2,800 pages per semester. That works out to twenty-two pages a day, including Saturday and Sunday. An "A" requires twice as many pages. Fourth graders do 1,200 pages. Grants pay for regular trips to the bookstore where each child is given money to buy a book. Grammar and spelling and vocabulary are learned as needed, when students write essays and discuss their books. This is a radical retooling of classroom practice that extends to every classroom in the school.

This is rare. In *most* of the Chicago schools I've visited that attempt big improvements, the improvements don't alter everyday classroom teaching. In most schools, they just tack some add-on programs to the regular curriculum.

Even when they try to improve everyday classroom teaching, many schools fail because they go about the whole thing with a "quick-fix" mentality. It's not unusual in Chicago to find schools where teachers have officially received training in the newer ways to teach writing or in "whole language" approaches to reading. But if you go into their classrooms and watch, you discover they still teach

using the most traditional methods. Not out of malice or incompetence, but because of lack of followup by the school and lack of focus. They're being asked to change the way they teach math and reading, but they're also being asked to do a dozen other things at the same time, and there's no followup support. No one checks to see if they're implementing the new techniques. No one helps them out if they're having trouble.

What Governors need to know is this: When funding school improvement programs, those that will have the biggest impact are the programs that address everyday classroom teaching. And these programs require an investment over time. They require more than a week of training seminars for teachers. After the seminars, there has to be a commitment to follow up. Making these changes is a long-term process.

And schools need to be focused. Governors should become wary of what some Chicago teachers call "Christmas-tree schools," places that have adopted dozens of new programs and ideas, like ornaments on a Christmas tree. Teachers at Taft, for example, were supposed to create a new vocational curriculum AND create mini-"schools-within-a-school" AND implement a new grading system AND try team teaching AND do more hands-on lessons in their classrooms AND figure out how to meet the new state education outcomes AND get students to work together in teams, and a few other things I can't even remember now. No wonder they didn't see much progress. Even the proreform teachers said they were overwhelmed. Priorities weren't set. At Washington Irving Elementary, in contrast, the staff spent its first year of reform just changing one thing: the way they taught writing. The next year they changed the way they taught reading. The following year they targeted something else.

Christmas-tree schools look good on paper. And they look good in the forty-five-minute tour the principal gives to visiting politicians. But beware. They can be as ineffective as any school.

Governors also need to know this: Lots of school improvement schemes fail because the teachers don't buy into them. At Taft, a large number of teachers felt that new programs and new ideas were being forced on them, and they balked. Some simply ignored the initiatives. Others voted them down in their teacher teams. The school split into proreform and antireform factions, and the debates became increasingly hostile. Friendships were strained. Sarcastic, anonymous letters appeared in people's mailboxes. One proreform

teacher received notes threatening his wife and family. All of this, education researchers say, is *typical* in schools undergoing reform.

Compare this with the process at Washington Irving Elementary School. There, the principal didn't require teachers to be retrained. It was voluntary. And after the first dozen teachers found that the techniques they learned made it easier for them to motivate their students, others signed up for the second year.

What all this means is that change takes a few years, even in the best schools. People need to be won over. There need to be early successes. And the most profound changes don't show up for a couple of years. One Washington Irving teacher told me it took three years of sending kids to buy their own books and requiring intensive reading on a large-scale, schoolwide basis before they really saw attitudes start to change.

The principal at Washington Irving said it took a year of reform — a full year — before the staff would even discuss the problems in the school honestly, without being defensive.

A Pragmatist's Approach to Multiculturalism: Developing Tools That Work

Often, the debate over multiculturalism has little to do with what actually happens in real multicultural programs in real schools. The hype would have us believe that multicultural programs are an exploding supernova, threatening the fundamental structure of American education. In fact, they're more like a tiny garland of flowers, slung casually over an otherwise traditional curriculum. They are usually small programs and often have little impact.

I've visited numerous schools in Chicago where the students are predominantly African American, where classrooms are decorated with Kente cloth curtains and hallways are lined with the names and faces of great African American leaders, writers, and scientists. It always seems lovely and homey. It makes people feel good. But often, it doesn't much affect what happens in the classroom. Kids still are learning to add mixed fractions and to punctuate sentences correctly. They're still turning in book reports and reading about the pilgrims. It isn't that radical a change.

And sometimes the multicultural studies get a kid to learn who otherwise wouldn't. Last year I met a kid like this. His name was Frank. He had five dots tattooed on his hand in a line, symbolizing the five-pointed star of the Latin Kings. He was a big, good-natured

kid, eighteen-years-old. He'd already dropped out of school once. Then he came to an alternative school called Latino Youth. Its curriculum was proudly, defiantly Chicano. In social studies, students talked about the history of the border patrol, about Mexican immigration, and about the policies of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. In art, kids painted Aztec-style murals. When Frank started at Latino Youth, he was still a gang member and still on the street a few nights a week. But gradually he started doing homework. At first, he didn't want members of his gang to know. He lied to them. When he wanted to stay home and do his schoolwork, he told them he was helping his mother or father.

Over time he became interested in school and more motivated in the traditional subjects like reading and math. And he was very clear about what had done the trick: "It was the subjects that got me interested," he told me. "Chicano history, learning my culture. I like the fact that we have a history that we were never taught. And it's interesting to me to hear it. So I guess I just like the stuff we talk about here."

Any teacher will tell you—in the city or the suburbs—the hardest task they face these days is motivating their students. Getting kids to want to learn. If Latino Youth did not have a multicultural curriculum, it would not have been able to get this kid out of the gang or push him toward a job and college.

There's a lot of yelling about multicultural studies. But a pragmatically minded, results-oriented Governor might choose to frame the issue this way: Multiculturalism is a practical educational tool. It might not be for every kid. It might not be for every school. But it aids some kids' education. It helps motivate some kids. If the goal is to get kids to learn, it seems a shame to take this tool out of teachers' hands.

Conclusion

Probably the biggest fad in education policy at the state level is for legislatures to mandate "educational outcomes" or "objectives" for their state's schools.

Making real change in schools takes time. It takes time for teachers to adjust to new ways of teaching. It takes time for them to agree on what would make their schools work better. It takes time for students to adjust to higher standards. In the schools where I've actually seen progress, the staff and the principal *together* decided how to change things. Parents were consulted, too. They

tackled one problem at a time and worked on it until they actually saw results.

In other words, the Governors can set all the goals, outcomes, and objectives they want, but unless they help teachers meet the goals in some way, they won't fix much of the problem.

What Governors can do, as far as I can tell, is this: Give principals enough freedom and enough control over their own school budgets that they can make the reforms they and their staff believe will work. Hold schools accountable. Let them know they're expected to improve and that dire consequences will follow if they don't. Monitor their progress. And be patient. Show the public some examples of schools that have changed and make the public understand that those changes take time.

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Joseph T. Gorman

Business Executive

Joseph T. Gorman became chairman and chief executive officer of TRW, Inc. in December 1988, after serving as president and chief operating officer for three years. Gorman joined TRW's legal department in 1968. He became secretary of TRW in 1970 and a vice president in 1972. He served as vice president and general counsel until 1980, when he was elected executive vice president and given responsibility for the Industrial and Energy Sector, then one of TRW's three major operating units. In 1984 he became a director of the company, a position he still holds.

Gorman is chairman of The Business Roundtable's Education Task Force, immediate past chairman of the U.S. government's Industry Policy Advisory Committee for trade policy matters, and chairman of the Defense Industry Initiative Steering Committee. He is a director of The Procter & Gamble Company and the Aluminum Company of America and serves on the advisory board of BP America Inc.

Partners for Progress—

Advocates for Change

Ask almost any business leader what they think is America's toughest problem, and they will almost universally say it is education. The harsh reality is that public schools are not teaching what young people need to be successful in our increasingly complex global economy.

This is not to say that the growing partnership involving American business, government, and the education community is not making progress toward improving public education. We simply are not doing it fast enough. We cannot think of education as a high priority. We must see it as a matter of economic, political, social, and cultural survival.

Clearly, positive signs are everywhere. Major U.S. corporations are committed to launching or enlarging their investments of human and financial resources to achieve systemic education reform.

These investments range from support of new academic institutions to involvement in broad reform efforts to attain systemwide or even statewide change. An example of the latter is The Business Roundtable's Education Reform Initiative, a ten-year CEO commitment to improve the quality of our nation's public schools at the K-12 level.

Business leaders from many of the world's largest companies are involved, including The Boeing Company, The BFGoodrich Company, IBM, The Procter & Gamble Company, United Parcel Service, and my company, TRW, Inc. They are working with Governors, state legislators, state and local school officials, principals, teachers, parents, and other private citizens and organizations to tackle the enormously complex challenge of creating an improved education system. Such a system must meet the needs of all our children, particularly those who are economically disadvantaged.

Although members of the business community cannot and should not run the show, we do have vitally important roles to play. Business leaders must be advocates for change in both national and state legislative forums.

We must assume responsibility for placing education at the top of our public policy concerns alongside other priority economic and societal problems. The quality of our nation's public schools must be considered a root cause of many of our problems and therefore central to everything else we do.

Our definition of corporate involvement has changed considerably over the last ten years. A decade ago, involvement meant adopting schools or taking on well-intended school improvement projects that tinkered at the margin. Today, corporate involvement must be aimed at transformational change, at doing things very differently. It requires a determination to mobilize people and programs in an overall strategy aimed at meaningful, measurable, and sustainable systemic change. It means direct personal involvement by chief executive officers and encouraging and empowering other company personnel to commit themselves to being agents of change.

As leaders in education improvement and reform, we must remain committed to the key principles that The Business Roundtable created back in 1989 following the Education Summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, with President George Bush and the nation's Governors. That summit led to the establishment of the National Education Goals.

These principles are considered by the roundtable to be essential components of a successful education system. They have been points of departure for discussions on education reform with Governors, state legislators, and other stakeholders, and they can be summarized as follows.

A successful education system operates on four assumptions:

- every student can learn at significantly higher levels;
- every student can be taught successfully;
- high expectations for every student are reflected in curriculum content, though instructional strategies may vary; and
- every student and every preschool child needs an advocate, preferably a parent.

A successful system:

- is outcome- or performance-based, not input- or process-based;
- uses assessment strategies as strong and rich as the expected results;

- rewards schools for success, helps schools in trouble, and penalizes schools for failure;
- gives school-based staff more empowerment and major roles in instructional decisions;
- emphasizes staff development for teachers;
- provides high-quality prekindergarten programs, at least for every disadvantaged child;
- provides health and other social services sufficient to reduce significant barriers to learning; and
- uses technology to increase the productivity of students and teachers and expand access to learning.

Achieving changes that embody these essential components requires broad and sustained support from all segments of society. Improving our nation's public schools requires parents, teachers, and principals to work with elected officials, business leaders, and other stakeholders to determine how improvement should be implemented. It requires support and engagement from the bottom up—in homes where teaching and learning take place—and from the top down—in our federal, state, and local systems of governance.

In this regard, changing state education policy requires the leadership of Governors. As the states' highest ranking elected officials, Governors are responsible for ensuring that sufficient resources are made available to support local school districts. Governors also have the ultimate authority through the state budget to fund education and to stipulate how the funds should be used to improve student learning.

Education is, and will always be, largely a state and local matter for Governors, state legislators, and local officials to administer. *Improving* education, on the other hand, is everyone's responsibility.

To move forward, all segments of society must be engaged in the change process and must work together as partners with a sense of common purpose. At stake is the future of our children, our ability to meet the challenges posed by a new global economic order, and the very quality of our way of life. And time is running short. Thus my plea to all would be to get on with it! *Together* we can and will make a difference.

Kenji Hakuta
Professor

Kenji Hakuta is professor of education at Stanford University, where he teaches courses in the doctoral and teacher education programs on the linguistic, psychological, and social aspects of bilingualism. His books include Mirror of Language: The Debate on Bilingualism *and* In Other Words: The Science and Psychology of Second Language Acquisition.

Language Minority Students: Challenges and Promises

There are two distinct challenges to the education of students who come to school with proficiency in a language other than English (so-called "Limited-English-Proficient," or L.E.P. students):

- providing opportunity to attain high levels of academic achievement even as they develop English proficiency; and
- enabling them to fully develop functional bilingualism.

The first is a simple question of equity, reinforced by federal civil rights and equal educational opportunity laws. As we move to elevate the level of intellectual demands in schools as a whole, we must fully recognize that all students must be included in this endeavor. The second is a question of what we do with the natural resource that these students bring to society (i.e., high levels of competence in foreign languages from all over the world that are attained only at great cost and limited success when they have to be learned from scratch by native speakers of English).

These challenges and promises should not be confused with each other. Each must be vigorously pursued for the good of the society. Both of these goals are attainable by virtually any given child. This conclusion is clearly supported by theory and a large array of reinforcing empirical studies of cognitive and language development. But the obstacles to attaining high academic learning and full bilingualism are formidable.

On the academic learning end, all of the problems associated with crushing poverty descend upon L.E.P. students. The vast majority of them attend schools with high concentrations of poverty, where it is not difficult to find a long list of problems—such as those documented in Jonathan Kozol's *Savage Inequalities*—that disrupt and puncture the human potential.

Although depression may be fully justified in this situation, there are positive steps that can be taken to benefit L.E.P. students. The most important is to ensure that the state education content standards are

made accessible to these students, using strategies ranging from instruction in the native language to specially tailored pedagogy. Regarding instruction in the native language (the so-called "transitional bilingual education" approach), it is important to bear in mind that the research clearly shows that this strategy in no way delays the development of English proficiency, and it can even accelerate that development.

Another important step is to ensure the full inclusion of these students in the local and state accountability system that is set up around education standards. Exclusion of L.E.P. students from accountability has been a perennial problem. As the education system moves more toward an orientation based on performance and outcomes, it becomes imperative to hold schools and districts responsible for all students.

On the bilingualism side of the issue, though there is a lot of evidence about the feasibility of dual-language instruction in all kinds of settings, the major obstacle is the public perception that speaking a non-English language, especially among immigrants, is somehow disloyal or un-American. As Joshua Fishman, an observer of ethnic languages in the United States, once remarked: "Many Americans have long been of the opinion that bilingualism is a 'good thing' if it was acquired via travel (preferably to Paris) or via formal education (preferably at Harvard) but that it is a 'bad thing' if it was acquired from one's immigrant parents or grandparents." Yet study after study documents the foreign language *incompetence* of the nation and underscores the fact that our best avenue to wealth in this area is the active promotion of the languages of the world richly represented in the language minorities within our very borders. A school superintendent once said, in denying a request that foreign languages be taught in high school, that "If English was good enough for Jesus, it is good enough for you." Silly as it may sound, this is a perspective that substantially remains in public opinion and one that business and social leaders competing in a global economy can ill afford.

The diversification of society is well upon us. Governors are in a clear position to assert their leadership in bringing together education, business, and community stakeholders to address the challenges and promises brought by language minority children.

Darlene Hidalgo

Parent

Darlene Hidalgo is a native of Chicago and a product of the Chicago Public School System. In high school, she participated in a work-study program that helped prepare her for her eighteen-year job as a supervisor in the Security Department of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. She resigned when her first child was born. She has been married for twenty-three years and has two daughters. She currently serves as president of the George Washington Elementary School PTA and as secretary of the local school council. She is an avid coin collector.

Help Us Help Ourselves

When Governors and other elected officials try to improve education, they should talk to parents and really listen to their concerns. Sometimes the so-called "experts" talk only to one another and forget to reach into the communities for suggestions and ideas.

I am the mother of two daughters who are students in the Chicago public schools. One is a junior in high school, the other is in the fourth grade at the George Washington Elementary School. George Washington is on the far southeast side of Chicago in a diverse and changing neighborhood. At one time, most families came from Europe. Today, there are more Hispanic families in the community.

I worked at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago as a supervisor for almost seventeen years and left my job when my oldest child entered first grade. I felt strongly that I wanted to be part of my children's education to let them know that I really cared. That doesn't mean that I sat in the classroom all day, but I did volunteer my time in the prekindergarten rooms, helping out at recess, organizing eighth-grade activities, or in the principal's office—wherever there was a need. The principal warmly welcomed my help and interest.

I was there when Chicago embarked on school reform and the formation of local school councils (LSCs). I have been very active in the school's PTA and am currently the president; I am also the secretary of the LSC.

The councils were established to bring site-based management (like a mini-school board) to each individual school. Each council is made up of six parents, two community members, two teachers, and the principal. The members are elected by their peers (parents elect parents and community members, teachers elect teachers) and serve for two years.

The LSC members' job is to make decisions on a School Improvement Plan, the principal's contract, the school budget, and the use

of state Chapter I funds. I am very honored to be part of the local school council and take my responsibilities seriously.

As a parent, a member of PTA, and a member of the LSC, I have concerns that I believe should be addressed by state and local public officials. Although the councils were developed as a major component of education reform, I have found that they have little or no authority. When the LSC makes a decision to enhance or improve a program, or to purchase equipment that would help the school, the central office vetoes it. This happens even when the school has money in its account and a valid reason for a purchase.

For example, when our school wanted to buy a new intercom that involved rewiring several classrooms, the central office said "no." Safety was one of our reasons for purchasing the intercom. We believe that it is important for all the rooms to hear the fire alarm and announcements from the office.

The LSC should be able to purchase items that are needed when they are needed. Currently, we have to wait months to get supplies or equipment.

I believe that the central office should be dissolved and the control of the schools given to the principal and the local school council. This would be a great first step in moving education reform forward.

The LSC and the principal should be responsible for hiring and firing personnel and for keeping up the school's physical plant. They know first-hand what is needed at the school; the central office does not. People in the central office often seem to approve or deny requests with no basis for their decisions. When LSC members and the principal work in harmony, as they do at our school, the students are the winners.

If our children are to be well-prepared for the twenty-first century, we have to have state-of-the-art equipment and books. We are currently trying to purchase new computers for all our classrooms. We are trying to prepare our children with whatever resources we can get or can afford, but it is not easy. Everything is on a fast track these days; it's very hard to catch up. It's like a car; you have to keep up the maintenance, otherwise it falls apart and you can't afford to fix it.

We also have to have top-rate teachers and administrators who know how to use all of these tools. Teacher training has to be upgraded constantly. There has to be time allotted for teachers to learn from one another and to take continuing education courses.

Schools can no longer get by with just the basics. Much more is needed. The students are so much brighter today. They are learning at a much faster pace than we did when we were their age. The schools need to adapt to this change in learning—they are our future!

I believe that it is our duty as a nation to supply the schools with what they need. This may mean more money. The state may have to increase taxes for education. I realize that this is an unpopular idea, but what choice do we have? What is more important to our country?

When I quit my job and came to volunteer at the school, I believed that I was going to make a difference and I think I have. I have only one child at George Washington Elementary School, but when I am there, I am there for all the children. The students really light up when they see parents helping out.

I know many parents, teachers, and school administrators are committed to improving public education and raising standards for all students. We can't do it alone. We need help from our state politicians and support from the public.

My advice to Governors and other elected officials: Make our schools safe, listen to parents, and let them contribute. See that schools get modern equipment and materials and well-prepared teachers. Keep standards high for all schools.

We need your help!

Harold L. Hodgkinson
Demographer

Harold L. Hodgkinson is widely known as a lecturer and analyst of education issues at all levels. His consulting assignments have taken him to 600 colleges and universities, numerous public school systems, state agencies, state legislatures, city governments, and corporations.

In 1989 he was one of three Americans awarded the title of Distinguished Lecturer by the National Science Foundation.

Hodgkinson is currently conducting research on demographics and education for the Center for Demographic Policy. Additionally, he serves as senior advisor to the American Council on Education, is a trustee at Hartwick College, and is a member of the Regents College Board of Overseers in New York.

A Demographer's View

I am a demographer and therefore have a different slant on many issues. Although the Goals 2000 legislation represents an important new force for educational change (and perhaps improvement), I would prefer to deal with several demographic forces that will transform your state and, eventually, the nation.

First, and most important, is the rapidly increasing ethnic diversity of young people in the United States. Although currently only nine states have half of the population (three rapid growers—California, Florida, and Texas—plus the low-growth states of Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania), by 2010 only four states will have a third of the nation's youth (California, Florida, New York, and Texas), and each state's youth cohort will be 55 percent minority. (What groups will we call "minorities" when they are more than half?) Although 2010 may seem a long way from now, keep in mind that the entering college freshman class of 2010 in your state is already here, in the babies born in 1992. Given the number of kids born into poverty, to single parents, and to those with drinking, drug, and criminal arrest histories in 1992, it is clear that we have already damaged the freshman class in college in your state by what has happened at birth to the children in 1992.

By 2030, *half* of all U.S. children will be "minorities," and by 2050, half of all Americans will be other than white. My two grandchildren will be 58 in the year 2050, so what we are talking about here is not speculation but hard-nosed reality for them. This increased diversity is caused by immigration, especially of Hispanics and Asians, and by a decline in the number of white children, which has already begun. (From 1980 to 1990, the number of white school-age children in the United States dropped by 4 million, and of the world's 5.4 billion people, only 18 percent are white, which will decline to 9 percent by 2020.) Without immigration, there would be no increase in the U.S. population from 1990 to 2000. In your state, the poorest, most diverse, most uninsured for health care, and most likely to be hungry, are your

youngest children. They did not create these conditions—they were born into them.

Although school improvement (note that not all reform is improvement) is a good thing, it is of greater importance that we stop devastating things from happening to your preschool children. It is cheaper and more effective to prevent bad things from happening (families falling apart, people falling into poverty, teenage girls getting pregnant, boys going to jail, people getting sick, children being abused, people getting addicted to drugs) than to try to patch them up later. You will spend about $22,000 a year on each prisoner in your state, enough to provide full tuition scholarships for four young people! What goes with being a prisoner? Statistically, the highest relationship is with being a high school dropout—82 percent of America's prisoners are high school dropouts as of 1992. Statistically, a dropout is more likely to become a prisoner than a smoker is likely to get lung cancer. Think of the concern in your state about the link between smoking and lung cancer, and the total lack of concern about the stronger statistical relationship between dropping out of school and becoming a prisoner, our most expensive social service.

Although it is good to keep dangerous criminals off the street, the return on the taxpayer's investment in the prisoner is zilch—70 percent of released inmates are back in jail within three years, having committed a crime similar to the one that sent them to jail the first time. Building jails and prisons does not reduce the crime rate. But over time, increasing the percentage of high school graduates will. It's a zero-sum game: If the prisoners get it, the college students won't. Jail is more expensive than Yale! You need a strategy to reduce the crime rate in your state, and building jails isn't it. Getting more young people through high school with skills for a job and/or college works. The earlier you can start preventing bad things from happening to children, the faster your prisoner rate will start to decline. The members of the first Head Start "class" are now twenty-four years old. Look at the difference that one program for three- and four-year-olds has made in their lives (L. Schweinhart and D. Weikart, *Young Children Grow Up* [Ypsilanti, Mich.: High Scope Press, 1990]).

Long-Term Impact on Head Start Participants

	Head Start	*Control Group*
Employed	59%	32%
High school graduate	67%	49%
College student	38%	21%
Been arrested	31%	51%
Been on welfare	18%	32%

In my opinion, these data represent more of a gain for the citizens in your state than all of the charter schools, vouchers, national goals, and Edison Projects currently hogging the media view of education. Every month, a new national report brings a new version of the terrible conditions of America's very young children, yet twenty-four hours later, the report is forgotten. There is a good demographic reason for this—as children become a smaller and smaller percentage of our society, and as our population ages, only about half of the adult population has any daily contact with a child age eighteen or younger. (About one house in four had a child of public-school age in the United States in 1990.) Only a Governor has the ability to effectively change some of these awful circumstances in the lives of one out of five—soon to be one out of four—children in the nation.

It is also important to think about how social services can be linked together at the state and local levels in your state. You cannot teach sick children, and CAT scanners should not be interpreted by high school dropouts. The health care and education systems obviously benefit each other, but others do also. Your state cabinet members, representing health care, education, housing, transportation, law enforcement, etc., essentially compete with one another for the number of positions in their agencies and dollars in their budgets. (In most states this is established basically by the legislature, but agencies also compete for your attention.) Collaboration at this level is virtually unknown, though some states are now providing joint funding across agencies for collaborative projects in reducing teenage pregnancy, improving diet and health care, etc. Some legislatures have held joint committee hearings, in which the agencies dealing with a problem testify together.

To the transportation system, Susie is a rider on a bus, to health care she is a patient, in education she is a student, in housing she is a resident, and in social work she is the child of a working mother with no after-school supervision. But she is the same "Susie," though each agency would require a different case history of her and would not share its own version with other agencies. Interagency collaboration is a fine way to reduce some operating costs and increase efficiency. It is also an excellent example to local community leaders in your state, especially mayors. (For most services, the local level is where the "rubber meets the road.")

The top 20 percent of students in our education system are world-class on anyone's measures of achievement. Below them are the 45 percent who will do well, who will work hard in school and in their job, and who are deserving of some higher education. But below them are the 35 percent who are very difficult to educate and who come from broken homes, poverty, crime, disease, and hunger. You can spot them in kindergarten and first grade. Indeed, they bring these conditions on the first day of kindergarten! The best come from private and good suburban public schools; the most difficult come from inner cities and rural settings, in almost equal numbers. (Rural poverty is one of the most intransigent and neglected issues dealing with America's youth.) Simplistic judgments like "America's schools are great" or "lousy" avoid the facts: Our schools are the best in the world for some kids and among the worst in the world for others. The best, and most important, way to improve the "output" of our school systems is to improve the "input"—the kids who enter kindergarten each year. If that happens in your state, the issue of education reform will take care of itself, and about ten years later your crime rate will start to go down. That's too long to wait for your reelection campaign, but if you get started, you will leave a vital legacy for your state's future.

Harold Howe II

Former U.S. Commissioner of Education

Harold Howe II recently retired as a senior lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He has been a teacher, principal, and superintendent of schools. He worked at the state level for Governor Terry Sanford of North Carolina and at the national level as U.S. commissioner of education for President Lyndon Johnson. Subsequently, he became vice president for education and public policy at the Ford Foundation. He has written widely on education issues. His most recent book is Thinking About Our Kids.

Remembering "The Forgotten Half"

You will do more for the people of your state if you think about and act upon the needs and problems of children and youth rather than the narrower goal of improved schooling. Young people in the United States between birth and age eighteen spend less than 10 percent of their time in school and more than 90 percent in families and communities or on the streets. The experiences they have away from school will determine in large part how well they do in school.

This message does not imply that schools will succeed without your attention. Instead, it asserts that youngsters who are unlikely to succeed in school are those from ineffective families, those who are hungry, those who are victims of poverty, those who are from families without preventive health care, and those who have no stimulating recreational opportunities. You cannot fix the schools so that the schools can fix the kids unless you can find ways to provide decent lives for children and youth.

Promising strategies are available for your initiatives on behalf of the young, and some states are already moving forward with them. You can create a statewide system to help young parents, particularly single parents, understand and carry out their parental roles more effectively. You can promote collaboration among agencies that serve children and youth, including schools, so that families are better served and gaps in service are identified and filled. By pushing this agenda at the state level, you can bring it to the local level, where it is most sorely needed. You can insist on periodic reports about the condition of children and youth in your state and give them visibility. Your leverage can awaken both public and private institutions to mentoring programs and youth service activities. Above all, you can become an advocate for the children and youth of your state, who face a more complex and confusing world than you did at their age. A "Governor's Council on the Next Generation" would be worth considering.

Your role as Governor in dealing with school improvement is complicated by the nature of our so-called "school reform movement."

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Over the last fifteen years or more, this effort has marched off in all directions. Sometimes it seems guided by the spirit expressed by the British poet Macaulay in his verses about Horatius: "But those behind cried 'Forward!' and those before cried 'Back!'" Be this as it may, I have two suggestions for your focus on schools.

The first is to give attention to the schooling needs of those students who can be described as "the forgotten half"—the young Americans whose luck in life makes them unlikely candidates for postsecondary education. They are the young men and women on whose schooling we spend the least and whose aspirations for the future are often defeated by the schools that serve them. They may well need the standards and tests being promoted by current federal legislation on schooling, but they need something else first—schools that help them succeed by using a totally different pedagogy than the school routines and practices that now defeat them. The shape and emphasis of this new approach to learning is now appearing in numerous experimental schools. It has two important characteristics—recognition of the difficulties in children's lives and a commitment to what has been learned about motivating the young and about their so-called "developmental needs" (a fancy phrase for fitting their learning to their level of maturity). There is some danger that our unwarranted haste for a new academic excellence will leave "the forgotten half" further behind their more fortunate peers than they already are.

My second suggestion regarding your state's attention to schools is to make a major change in the preparation and professional development of teachers. Without strong emphasis on both subject-matter learning and a totally restructured approach to classroom practice, the goals of an improved curriculum and new levels of accountability will be self-defeating. The institutions that prepare teachers and are partly responsible for their further development of skills and knowledge are mainly state colleges and universities. I can't name a single Governor who has the upgrading of teacher preparation as a first priority project with significant gubernatorial support. The teacher preparation programs of our country remain the poor cousins of higher education. One comparison will serve to illustrate this point. We spend about ten times more money to prepare people who will care for our children's bodies than we do to prepare those who will care for their minds. We see our physicians as true professionals whose judgment we trust; but we fail to see our teachers in that light. Too often, we see them as literate babysitters.

There is a growing body of knowledge about the art and science of teaching. If it were widely and well used in places that prepare teachers and in the design of internships in which teachers can practice their skills, the trail to truly professional status for teachers would open up. A main source for producing these effects is the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which is chaired by a current Governor. Our schools would benefit greatly if other Governors would follow his example and rethink both the certification of teachers and the provision of their preparation. Another source for ensuring teacher quality is available in the PRAXIS tests for teacher certification. These tests are more costly than others that compete with them, but they are well worth the added expense.

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Sharon Lynn Kagan

Professor

Sharon Lynn Kagan, a senior associate at Yale's Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy, is recognized nationally and internationally for her work related to the care and education of young children and their families. Kagan is a frequent consultant to the White House, Congress, the National Governors' Association, the U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services, and numerous national foundations, corporations, and professional associations. She is a former chair of the Family Resource Coalition Board of Directors, a governing board member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, a member of President Bill Clinton's education transition team, and a member of the national commissions on Head Start and Chapter 1.

Augmenting her scholarship with work in the field, Kagan has been a Head Start teacher and director, a fellow in the U.S. Senate, an administrator in the public schools, and director of the New York City Mayor's Office of Early Childhood Education.

Education Reform: Impertinent Issues and Pertinent Questions

Impertinent Issues

Massive attention to education reform suggests that this nation is profoundly dissatisfied with the performance of its schools. Reforms abound: some strive to improve pedagogy and instruction; others to alter relationships between teachers and administrators; others to tilt the focus to an outcomes orientation; and still others to serve families and communities in new ways. Although they share the somewhat diffuse goal of "educational improvement," each of the above reform efforts is distinct in specific intent and strategy. Moreover, each emanates from a different concept of the nature of the "educational problem" with little coordination occurring between efforts. *Impertinent Issue 1: Like the blind person who fails to see the whole elephant, American education reform is being conceptualized and constructed piecemeal.*

The lack of a clear, cohesive conceptualization of education reform is not the only problem; it is joined by a remarkably conventional strategy for implementing change—the model and replication approach. This strategy typically involves national or local leaders who develop and champion "models" that are later adopted by schools and districts not engaged in the original conceptualization. To compensate for parachuting in a "foreign" model, adoptees are usually encouraged to adapt the model to local circumstance. The problems that result are many. First, in the necessary process of adaptation, some of the spark, ingenuity, commitment—not to mention potential impact—associated with the pioneering model can be lost. Second, no matter how much tailoring is done, adaptation strategies, by definition, remain an outside-in approach to reform, often accommodating to, rather than emanating from, the indigenous culture, timeline, style, and pace of each individual setting. Third, led by individual spokespersons, all advocating their particular brand of reform, model-replication approaches are rarely coordinated, and sometimes compete with one another. Under the guise of education reform, we find local schools and districts, already

inundated with operational pressures and problems, beleaguered by a bevy of new strategies and new starts. *Impertinent Issue 2: The commonly utilized model-replication strategy is far better at modeling than at replicating; moreover, outside-in strategies need to be matched by real supports for inside-out reform.*

School reform efforts, even if they are well-conceived, coordinated, and implemented, are rarely bold enough to produce the kinds of reform envisioned by advocates of change. Few, for example, have proffered profound alterations in school governance; few have contemplated robust realignments of school power relationships; and few have given more than lip service to entirely new approaches to financing education. *Impertinent Issue 3: Although advocating "school reform," we have not allowed ourselves to be sufficiently inventive or audacious; we want change and improvement without overhaul.*

Pertinent Questions

Given the lack of a clear and unified conceptualization of what we mean by reform and the lack of an effective and sufficiently bold strategy to achieve it, *Pertinent Question 1* must be: *Is there hope for education reform?* Despite recurrent disaffection with American public education, two points related to this question deserve note: first, many who respond to educational surveys proclaim satisfaction with their local schools, though not with American schooling in general; and second, over time, as Pat Graham notes, education in this nation has actually delivered what society wants. For example, America wanted greater access and more sustained attendance for all students, and we got it. Viewed optimistically, these facts suggest that there is current support for specific schools and historic support for schools acting as change agents for reform. That is to say, there is some will and hope.

Pertinent Question 2, then, must be: *By what means do we energize that will and realize that hope?* Three new "thinks" seem necessary and urgent. First, American educational reform can no longer be understood or advanced as a series of isolated interventions; it must desist on promoting the model-replication strategy only, substituting a more conceptually integrated and bold "think" about reform. Second, twenty-first century reform must build upon what we know about pedagogy and the nature of learning, understanding that all children *learn* in the context of doing and *live* in the context of families. Consequently, while applauding an orientation that is grounded in cognitive and noncognitive outcomes, we must also be resolute in creating rich pedagogical and learning environments

that engage families as cornerstones of reform. In so doing, we must "rethink" our understandings of pedagogical reform, fully acknowledging that it is as intimately and inextricably linked to family engagement as it is to instructional strategy. Third, we must loudly proclaim that though education reform is key to social reform, it is not solely responsible for it. As badly as America needs strong schools, it also needs strong communities and strong community agencies working with schools to improve students' educational and life chances. Education reform and social reform are entwined but not isomorphic agendas.

Nothing short of the courage to tackle other impertinent issues, the wisdom to ask more pertinent questions, and the boldness to create additional new "thinks" will advance education reform to the height of our hopes.

Megan C. Lawson
Middle School English Teacher

Megan C. Lawson has been a middle school teacher for the past six years. She currently teaches seventh- and eighth-grade communications skills in Blowing Rock School in Blowing Rock, North Carolina. Lawson received a bachelor's degree in journalism and advertising from Louisiana State University and her teacher certification from Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. She has been recognized for her achievements by being honored as Blowing Rock School Teacher of the Year, Business and Professional Women's Young Careerist, and Jaycees' Young Educator of the Year. She also is listed in Who's Who Among America's Teachers.

On the state level, she has served on committees to review the curriculum and testing for communications skills, she participated on a team of teachers representing her school at the North Carolina Teacher Academy, and she was recently appointed by Governor James B. Hunt Jr. to serve on the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission. As a candidate for certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Lawson has been actively involved in a task force in North Carolina that supports and promotes National Board certification for the state's teachers.

Accepting Teachers as Experts

Recently I attended a conference where I was asked to speak about the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, an innovative program designed to raise the standards of public education and certify teachers nationally. As I enthusiastically shared with my fellow teachers the exciting opportunities this program offers, a colleague sitting behind me, thinking he could not be heard or seen (by the eyes in the back of my head), rolled his eyes and moaned sarcastically, "Oh great, another program that's going to save education in America." Being a teacher of middle school students and an expert on sarcasm, very little gets by me, especially eye rolling, moaning, gum chewing, and note passing. (He wasn't doing the last two.) However, his comments and attitude bring to light a tragedy among teaching professionals.

Many educators have become frustrated and disheartened by "save-public-education-and-the-world-while-you're-at-it" reforms that have been discontinued or have failed before they ever really got off the ground. What Governors need to know about education for this century and the next is simple: Institute and be committed to programs in your state that help foster a professional environment for teachers, encourage the finest young people to enter the teaching profession, and help change the public's perception of public education and educators. The key, in a word, is professionalism.

Teaching is the hardest job there is, and it is getting harder every day. As our country faces new and more difficult struggles, so do the nation's teachers. The classroom is a mirror of society complete with teenage pregnancy, drugs, violence, racial tension, and poverty. Even the most dedicated professionals struggle to remain motivated in the face of these challenges. The states' leaders can help turn around this potential decline in attitude and motivation and can do so at nominal cost to the state's budget.

Governors can begin by accepting classroom teachers for what they are: the experts on education. Give teachers a voice in decisions

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regarding state education policy. Establish teacher advisory committees, appoint at least one classroom teacher as a full-time education advisor to your staff, and be committed to seeking out, listening to, and valuing the opinions of teachers in the area of public education.

Continue by fostering a professional environment for the educators in your state. By eliminating the interruptions and distractions in the classroom, teachers can get on with the business of the day: educating children. In what other profession would constant destructors and discipline problems be allowed to remain? How many doctors would allow the presence of nurses who threatened them, threw surgical instruments around the operating room, or screamed vulgarities at the patients? What grocers would allow bag boys and butchers to remain in their employment if they routinely insulted the other workers and kept the customers from buying their groceries? What businessman would condone repeated absenteeism or unpreparedness from his employees? Only in education do we allow students to remain in the classroom who are habitually rude, threatening, disruptive, and unprepared. What type of message does this send to students about what will be tolerated in the "real world?" Remove these students from the regular classroom and provide them with an alternative school environment where they can learn under the supervision and direction of instructors designed to handle their unique behavior problems.

Institute programs in your state that promote and reward excellence in teaching and that give teachers the opportunity to gain insights and new perspectives on the ever-changing business of education. Create centers for teacher advancement where excellent teachers can share and discuss successful strategies and provocative ideas about educating young people. For too long, education has been a lonely profession where teachers work in isolated 25' x 25' rooms bordered by bulletin boards, bookcases, and chalkboards. Help teachers become collaborators by providing them with opportunities to sharpen their skills and deepen their knowledge of their subject areas. And provide teachers with the time and money to explore these programs that will better prepare them to deal with the challenges and opportunities of education today. Additionally, entice your state's finest high school and college students to become teachers by providing financial aid and incentives to enter and remain in the teaching field.

Most important, be committed to the success of these programs. By doing this you will restore the faith of teachers in what government can and will do for them and public education. These types of

programs alone can help change the attitude of educators and the public's perception of what takes place in the classrooms of our country.

Finally, promote education and educators. In every possible way, give teachers the opportunity to be viewed by the public professionally. Reward excellence in teaching often and in many ways. Establish programs that honor successful and innovative teaching on the local, regional, and state levels.

As we approach the twenty-first century, much must be done to improve the professional environment in our nation's schools and the public's perception of the dedicated professionals whose main objective each day is the education of the children of this country. With the ever-increasing demands placed on educators, programs must be implemented and committed to nourish, stimulate, and challenge teachers to achieve their highest potential.

Leon M. Lederman
Nobel Laureate

Leon M. Lederman is director emeritus of the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, Illinois, after serving as director from 1979 to 1989. He is Pritzker Professor of Science at the Illinois Institute of Technology. He was professor of physics at Columbia University from 1958 to 1989 and the Frank L. Sulzberger Professor of Physics at the University of Chicago from 1989 to 1991.

Lederman's research has spanned four decades. In 1956 Lederman and his team from Columbia University discovered the long-lived neutral K-meson particle. In 1961 Lederman and his group discovered the muon neutrino, which provided the first proof that there was more than one type of neutrino, for which he received the Nobel Prize in Physics. In 1977 he and his collaborators discovered evidence for a new elementary particle called the "bottom quark." A broad spectrum of innovative experiments he led at Brookhaven National Laboratory, Fermilab, and the CERN laboratory in Geneva set the paradigm for modern nuclear physics and particle physics research.

His numerous awards include the National Medal of Science (1965), the Wolf Prize in Physics (1983), and the Nobel Prize (1988).

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Improving the Scientific Literacy of Teachers and Students

A plausible mission for our schools is to prepare students to cope in a world characterized by an ever-increasing pace of change. The driving engines of change are science and science-based technology. The revolution in communications, information, and transportation; the ubiquitous spread of computer literacy; and the exploding capabilities of computers continue to evolve and modify the way people think and behave. Clearly, the political changes in Eastern Europe and subsequently around the world were accelerated by television, fax machines, e-mail, and a host of processes derived from new technologies that are altering our very language.

Science and technology also underlie a large variety of policy issues, such as how much to spend on environmental remediation and in what sequence? What are the federal and state roles in nurturing emerging technologies? Who should support basic research and at what level? How do we replace the once powerful, but now languishing, industrial research laboratories? How do we encourage medical advances but control costs? Should we teach "scientific" creationism?

As we plunge into the twenty-first century, the number and nature of issues will surely escalate. We live in a world being continually shaped by science but with a population that is scientifically illiterate. Such illiteracy threatens our ability to maintain a capable workforce, and it threatens the democratic process, which increasingly requires citizens to have some scientific "savvy."

The burden on our schools is to produce science-savvy graduates, and this influences the entire K-16 curriculum. We must arrest the disastrous influence of unprepared teachers on children who begin school with intense curiosity about their world. We know that science and mathematics, taught using the new techniques suggested by research in cognition science, engage young children and generally result in better overall learning. The primary goal of K-8 education is to produce children ready for high school with a command of

elementary algebra, a mastery of reading and writing, and a good sense of the thinking skills that the process of scientific inquiry requires. States and cities must see to a *major* increase in teacher enhancement activities with solid objectives, especially in the ability to teach math and science in the K-8 grades. In Japan, more than 30 percent of the school budget is devoted to the teachers' professional development; in the United States, this figure is usually less than 1 percent.

It also seems obvious that we need to have a mandated three-year science and three-year math requirement for all high school students. This is a clear task for Governors. Such a requirement would stimulate a *coherent* curriculum for ninth-, tenth-, and eleventh-grade science that would serve the child well throughout life. It would lead naturally to a variety of continuations, from school-to-work transition through college-bound potential scientists.

It is incredible that 99 percent of all high schools teach science in the wrong (alphabetical?) order: biology, chemistry, then physics. The pyramid of science goes the other way: physics sits on a base of mathematics, the laws of chemistry are derived from physics principles, and biology depends on basic chemistry.

We thus propose starting the three-year requirement with a conceptual (minimum math) ninth-grade physics class based upon whatever algebra is taught in eighth grade. Physics, dealing with response of objects (baseballs, planets, electrons) to forces (gravity, electricity) teaches us how atoms are structured. Students will be handed over to tenth-grade chemistry with a good sense of what an atom is, how it holds together.

Given such students, the chemistry class can proceed to learn about how atoms combine to make molecules (compounds). Similarly, the hand-over to biology permits the teaching of modern, molecular-based biology of genes, cells, nucleic acids, DNA, etc. In designing such a course, one would stress general principles (conservation of energy, probability) that can be revisited in each of the three years. Applications to technology and environment can be made coherently, from the viewpoint of each discipline. Finally, issues of science and society again can be addressed coherently and with increasing depth as the students' grasp of how the world works begins to deepen. Incidentally, this proposal fits gracefully within the guidelines of the emerging national science and mathematics standards. Twelfth grade can offer a good earth science course, computer literacy, technology, or advanced placement science.

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If we do it right, we will make profound progress in addressing the scientific literacy problem, perhaps the most revolutionary change in precollege education in this millennium. Supplemented by new educational technology, all of the students who graduate from the high schools of America will be capable—each in his or her own way—of fulfillment and contribution in the new age of technology.

The obstacles are many: We've been teaching three independent disciplines in the wrong order for 100 years. We need more science teachers, much softer disciplinary boundaries, a more enlightened accreditation policy, and a strong effort to reeducate the science teachers in this logical order. The radical nature of the proposed shake-up can only serve to reinvigorate this important piece of high school education for all students. All of these requirements can be created by spirited political leadership and backed up by scientists and educators who share the vision.

Bertha O. Pendleton
Superintendent

Bertha O. Pendleton, superintendent of the San Diego Unified School District since 1993, has provided exemplary educational leadership in the San Diego community for more than forty years. Beginning her career as a math teacher at Memorial Junior High School, and subsequently serving in the roles of school counselor, coordinator, vice principal, high school principal, director of compensatory education, assistant superintendent, and deputy superintendent, Pendleton has devoted her professional life to improving teaching and learning for all students. Her responsibilities have included all aspects of school operations and educational leadership, including school restructuring, instructional programs, budget development, personnel supervision, and facilities planning.

In addition to her work with the San Diego city schools, Pendleton is an adjunct professor at Point Loma Nazarene College and a member of the faculty at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where she is affiliated with the Urban Superintendents' Program.

Change in Public Schools

I will use only one set of statistics in this short commentary, though I could use dozens. However, I think if we keep these few figures in mind and take them to heart, we will not only reform, rebuild, and reinvigorate our public schools, but also address our problems in a meaningful and productive way. Here are the statistics:

> In 1950, 60 percent of all jobs in America required few or no skills. By 1990, only 35 percent of the jobs called for unskilled labor; that proportion will drop to just 15 percent by the year 2000.

Despite our years of reform efforts and school restructuring activities, many of which have been quite successful, we have only just begun to seriously consider and respond to the consequences these facts suggest. In a very short period, America could lose much of its competitive edge in the world economy unless we are willing to change.

Not only have commerce and industry been rapidly globalized, but the explosive growth of technology has also contributed to dramatic changes in the nature of work. The workplace of the future will require workers who can solve problems, think, communicate, make decisions, work in groups, and be responsible. Our schools are falling far short of preparing enough young people to work and thrive in that future workplace.

In recent years, national and state reports have pointed out the rapid changes in the global economy and in the workplace. They all have sounded the alarm.

For example, the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce in its report *America's Choice: high skills or low wages!* said, "America may have the worst school-to-work transition system of any advanced industrial country." In 1990 the U.S. Secretary of Labor formed the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills. The commission's report provided a wealth of valuable information about essential work skills and the need for rapid school reform.

The California State Department of Education established a high school task force to study public high schools and made recommendations for change. The task force's report *Second to None* describes a new approach to high school reform in which the curriculum is reorganized to connect students more closely to their postsecondary career goals. We are finding more powerful teaching and learning strategies, studying comprehensive accountability and assessment systems, and promising new ways to restructure schools. This report encouraged close collaboration between school and industry. We must bring school to the workplace and the workplace to school.

In short, some excellent beginnings are being made in school districts across the country. We know many of the things that must be done and we understand how to proceed. We don't need more new curricular approaches. The real key to achieving world-class schools is establishing learning communities where education is a shared value and the whole community works to make it happen.

This is where a Governor can make an enormous contribution. It could involve certain political risks, but somehow it must be done. The Governor must put the job of turning the schools around at the top of his or her agenda. The Governor must bring educators, business leaders, school board members, parents, students, and other interested and concerned individuals together to establish education goals for the state and timelines for education reforms. Then he or she must lead an energetic, high-profile statewide campaign to convince the legislature and every citizen that this is the highest priority for ensuring our future.

Schools must graduate students with good math and verbal skills and strong problemsolving and reasoning ability. We must invest in the professional development of our staff so they will be able to manage and lead change. Funding must be found in a weak economy to do such things as build hundreds of new schools and renovate thousands of others. Overcrowded classrooms and poorly maintained buildings should no longer be tolerated. Good teachers must be paid well. All students must have access to computers and meaningful educational technology programs to teach them the skills necessary to succeed in the Information Age.

The list goes on, and so must the campaign. Few things are more important.

Hilary Pennington
Workforce Development Analyst

Hilary Pennington is vice president and cofounder of Jobs for the Future (JFF). Founded in 1983, JFF is a national nonprofit organization that conducts research, provides technical assistance, and proposes policy innovation on the interrelated issues of workforce development, economic development, and learning reform.

A nationally recognized expert on education and training issues, Pennington has worked with federal and state governments to develop public policies that integrate economic and human resource development. She has advised federal and state policymakers on their attempts to draft school-to-work transition legislation that offers restructured high schools, work-based learning opportunities, and career pathways for all youth. She also helped shape the federal School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994.

Prior to cofounding Jobs for the Future, she was an associate in the Public Policy Issues Analysis Department of Aetna Life and Casualty Company, where she developed corporate programs on economic development, workforce training, and education issues.

Improving Education Performance

The knowledge, skills, and flexibility of its people rank among the most important assets of any state. Over the past decade, strong consensus has emerged across the political spectrum that human resources are a bedrock of "competitiveness," and Governors have invested significant financial and political capital in education reform, workforce development, adult literacy, and other initiatives. As we approach the mid-1990s, what key issues should concern all Governors? What insights and strategies will help them improve education performance?

As they survey the landscape, new Governors will recognize immediately that it is crowded with a bewildering array of programs, reform strategies, legislation, and organizations set up to help improve education. It includes many state-based education reform efforts as well as Goals 2000, the Improving America's Schools Act, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, the Carl Perkins Act, the Job Training Partnership Act, the JOBS program, and many more.

There is also a lot of history. A decade of various reform efforts have been slow to show progress. The public is increasingly impatient with the pace and results of most reforms, and families are anxious about their own prospects for economic security and opportunity. The challenges for leadership in this arena are significant.

I offer seven rules for success, then apply them to a specific piece of the education reform puzzle to help achieve the overall goal of improving education performance and the transitions from school to career and further learning.

1. *Remember the big picture and keep others focused on it.* Don't let day-to-day struggles over vision, resources, and turf take over. Your state is part of a global economy in which individuals and state and national standards of living depend on the state's ability to add value and to capture the high-wage end of production and service jobs. Rapid change will be the single predictable reality. Therefore, a primary objective of a "cradle-to-grave" education system must be

to develop flexible, independent learners and to ensure their easy movement back and forth between school and work as their needs change. This is critical given the increasing skill needs of high value-adding companies and the changing nature of employment itself. Growth in the contingent workforce is one example; today, almost one third of all workers work as "temps" or individual contractors, as companies outsource more and more functions. In the new economy, staying competitive for individual workers means having easy access to ongoing education and training. Many education institutional structures and incentives that are currently in place, however, work directly against this objective.

In practice, improving this aspect of education performance means breaking down arbitrary barriers between levels of education, especially within higher education, and ensuring that credits transfer easily between them.

2. *Set up systems that help all people learn to meet very high standards.* In other words, prepare all people as if they were going on to college or to work in the most state-of-the-art "high-performing" workplace. Having an adequate supply of such people is necessary to the ability of firms in your state to adopt and expand modern production practices. Moreover, your workers/students can carry these skills into other jobs and perhaps even use them to create businesses of their own. In practical terms, this means that you must not direct separate policies, practices, and expectations to college-bound vs. noncollege-bound youth or to in-school vs. out-of-school youth. The nature of the changing economy means that differences in required preparation for work and college are not as great as they used to be.

3. *Don't assume that schooling is synonymous with learning.* A growing body of cognitive psychology and state-of-the-art practice in corporate training programs demonstrates that most people learn best by doing, through active, hands-on, experiential learning that is far from the norm in most of today's "drill-and-grill" schools. The current movement toward increased standards, testing, and requirements in schools will not necessarily produce environments in which this kind of active learning happens. Consistent leadership and the encouragement of innovative practices can help.

4. *Place a high priority on professional development.* The move toward outcomes and higher standards is necessary but not sufficient for improving education performance. Without teachers who are able to teach in new ways, advances in student performance will be limited.

There is enormous room for innovation and leadership on this issue, with many of the most promising strategies encouraging a fundamental reshaping of how teachers spend their time—moving away from isolated practice in classrooms, with "pull-out" staff development programs on the teaching techniques of the moment, toward creating communities of teachers/learners who observe and enhance each other's practice.

5. *Set and monitor progress toward clear benchmarks for performance.* Use these to define and build popular support for the common purpose of education improvement and to introduce and enforce accountability across the broad system of education and training providers. For example, what is your state's baseline today in terms of the percentage of young people who graduate from high school? What is the completion, or graduation, rate from your institutions of higher education? How many young people have access to structured work-based learning opportunities? Is information about the success of graduates for each education and training institution in the state widely available? What goals for improvement on each of these measures can you set for two years from now? For four years from now? What needs to change in order to get there? The state of Oregon offers the best example to date of the effectiveness of such benchmarks in refocusing public attention and public sector performance on workforce development and education improvement.

6. *Understand that there are no quick fixes.* Make realistic promises, set long-term expectations, and then use the benchmarks to track incremental progress toward those long-term goals. The fact that there are no quick fixes doesn't have to mean that you have no clear standards or can't progress toward those standards. But promising unrealistic timeframes for results is not helpful to anyone.

7. *Keep using your office and bully pulpit to leverage systemic change.* The easy inclination for any newly elected official with a finite term is to add programs and special initiatives of his or her own. Your state will prosper far more in the long run from leadership to build a more effective system for education and training. Performance benchmarks are one strategy for focusing attention on the system and the results it produces for people. Others include putting in place state and regional structures, like the human resource investment councils that several states have launched, that can set priorities and allocate resources in a coordinated, strategic way.

I will close by addressing more specifically one small piece of the education improvement puzzle: the transition from school to careers and further learning—a group of "reform" efforts that currently goes under the misnomer of "school-to-work transition"—to illustrate how your state might use the seven principles presented here to put in place an effective education and training system that produces improved results for all of your citizens. I choose the issue of transitions between school and work because addressing it effectively requires integrating the interrelated worlds of school, the workplace, and further learning.

Unfortunately, many states that are now embarking on efforts to improve their systems for helping young people make transitions from school to careers are approaching this as an opportunity to improve high school vocational education for some students (the "noncollege-bound"), rather than as a way to transform learning for all students through a variety of integrated, hands-on approaches that help students achieve a high-quality academic standard.

Instead, approaching the design of a school-to-career system according to the principles outlined here would mean creating nontracked, thematic programs of study that can prepare all high school students for both employment and/or postsecondary education (programs with a solid academic core organized around "career majors"); creating career-based programs built around broadly defined industry or occupational clusters, rather than depending on job-specific preparation for entry-level work right after high school; incorporating work-based learning into these programs as part of a changed pedagogy in high school based on what is best in vocational education (experiential, project-based learning, demonstrations of mastery, mentoring and coaching, etc.); eliminating the general curriculum and vocational programs that have low academic and occupational expectations; and forging explicit links to postsecondary institutions of all kinds—not only two-year colleges, but also four-year colleges and universities—so that no postsecondary options are closed off to those who successfully complete high school.

What we know about learning opportunities like this—the kind that Jobs for the Future and others are working to create—is that they succeed dramatically in improving education performance. Student achievement and aspirations rise; in the programs we have assisted, 80 percent of participating students decide to go on to college. Employers find more satisfaction in developing these kinds of structured work-based learning opportunities and curricula than in

their traditional, low-impact school-business partnerships. They also find that the experience of mentoring a young person increases the morale and skills of adult workers. Communities involved in such programs find that they must invent or strengthen the connecting infrastructure that enables them to identify promising career areas and develop quality school and work experiences within them. The most ambitious community and state efforts link these school-to-career initiatives to their adult workforce preparation efforts.

Such results are by no means easy or automatic. But, as this example shows, structuring state efforts to improve education performance in terms of such a holistic, strategic vision can yield dramatic, long-term results. It is in this way, rather than in piecemeal programmatic efforts, that the Governors' leadership can have the greatest impact.

Lauren B. Resnick

Professor

Lauren B. Resnick is an internationally known scholar in the cognitive science of learning and instruction. Her recent research has focused on assessment, the nature and development of thinking abilities, and the relationship between school learning and everyday competence. Resnick is cofounder and director of New Standards, a consortium of seventeen states setting shared performance standards and building examinations that will yield an internationally benchmarked system of standards and authentic assessments for American students. Her National Academy of Sciences monograph "Education and Learning to Think" has been influential in school reform efforts, and her widely circulated Presidential Address to the American Educational Research Association "Learning In School and Out" has shaped thinking about youth apprenticeship and school-to-work transition. She is currently launching a program on learning in workplaces that are converting to "high-performance" practices. Resnick is professor of psychology at the University of Pittsburgh, where she directs the Learning Research and Development Center.

Making High School Count

It's a good bet that people in your state have been working hard to reduce the high school dropout rate. And the effort may be succeeding. More young people than ever may be staying in school for twelve years and leaving with a coveted diploma in hand.

That's good news. But are these young people getting the kind of education they should? What does a high school diploma in your state tell you about a young person? Does it mean that the student can read any newspaper published in your state? Can he or she write a letter to the editor that is coherent and grammatically correct enough to be published? What about math? Can you count on any high school graduate in your state being able to understand the instructions and do the computations needed to follow the steps in a machine operating manual? Does a high school diploma in your state tell you that its holder knows chemistry or biology?

Probably the high school diploma in your state—as in every other state—doesn't provide evidence that students can do any of these things. It doesn't mean that they are well-educated. The diploma means only that the students attended school—most of the time—for twelve years. It means that they completed some courses labeled *English*, *math*, *science*, and perhaps *history*. But it doesn't say anything about what the content of those courses was or how much they really learned.

Even grades don't tell you much. Ask the admissions director of your state university. You'll learn that what the diploma means "depends." In some schools, grades mean something; in other schools, grades do not mean anything. It can vary from teacher to teacher.

You can't count on it! That about sums it up. You can't count on the high school diploma as meaning much of anything. Yes, some superbly well-educated young people come out of the high schools, both public and private, in your state. They know as much as any young people their age in the world, and they probably combine lots of solid school learning with the American gift of "know-how."

which means they can use what they know to do useful work in the world. But there aren't nearly as many such young people in your state as there should be—as there can be.

People in the schools in your state will tell you the same thing. Visit a few high schools, and talk with the principals and teachers and students there. Ask them if they are satisfied with their courses, the levels of learning achieved, and the meaning of their diploma. If they're honest with you, they'll tell you they are not satisfied. They'll make it clear that lots of students aren't working very hard and that in many courses teachers don't ask for much.

Most high schools have a group of students of whom everyone is proud. They take the tough courses, get good grades, are the backbone of the extracurricular program, go on to college, and come back to visit, making the hometown proud. Another group of students are taught to be "okay." They don't make trouble. They do more or less what is asked of them. But teachers are, if you press them, careful not to ask too much—the minimum for "getting by" is all that's expected. There is usually a third group, too. In some schools, people won't want to talk about this minority of students who are just barely scraping along. In other schools, most students will be in this third group. These youngsters, you'll learn, are hardly literate. They probably don't attend school regularly. In order to get their diplomas—and of course not all will—grading criteria will have to be softened; students will have to be given the benefit of the doubt. No wonder colleges can't count on grades or diplomas.

No one in the schools likes these practices, but they feel trapped. If you ask people why they're making such low demands, you'll hear about youngsters coming to high school who can barely read and for whom basic arithmetic is a mystery. How, you will be asked, can we be expected to educate these young people to a real high school standard when they're so badly educated in the elementary and middle schools?

If you visit middle schools, you'll hear a similar story, though there is often more belief in the inherent capacity of these younger students. Teachers and principals will tell you they have some terrific youngsters. But they'll also tell you that they can't ask too much of most of them, because they're not ready for more demanding work and are not very academically motivated.

The situation is more hopeful in elementary schools, at least at first. All the children come to school eager to learn and confident that

they can. Kindergarten and first grade are a time of anticipation and energy. Everything seems possible. But it doesn't turn out that way. By third or fourth or fifth grade, you can already identify the students marked as winners and losers. And the large middle band of children will already have settled into a sort of "mediocrity will do" mode. They don't see the need to work hard or learn a lot.

So the die is cast early. You can't count on the high school diploma in your state because some children come out of middle school unable to read their history or science textbooks. You can't count on the high school diploma because, somewhere between first and fifth grade, expectations of mediocrity become so firmly established that individual teachers, even whole schools, have trouble bucking the tide. They can't, by themselves, demand more, teach better, and produce higher achievement. Educators can't, by themselves, make the high school diploma count.

They can make a difference, though, if you work with them to make a high school credential in your state mean something about learning. Here is what I think you have to do.

First, *set standards for achievement.* Your students can and will learn more if they know clearly what they are supposed to learn. Teachers will welcome clear standards, too. They will be energized by the kind of social compact that clear expectations for learning can set up among them, their students, and the students' families—a compact that says, "I expect you to learn this; I will teach in a way that will enable you to learn it if you try hard; I expect you to try, and you can count on me to work with you until you learn what I know you can." Families will be glad to have clear expectations, tough ones for which they can hold their children and their children's teachers accountable. And, perhaps surprisingly, youngsters themselves will be glad to know what is expected.

Second, *make sure that meeting your standards matters to students and families.* The best way to do that is to establish a high school certificate that students earn not just by attending school but also by showing that they have learned what they're supposed to learn. To do that, they'll need to take exams that are scored against the standard and to have portfolios of their classwork graded according to the standards. Some states are calling this kind of standards-based achievement certificate the certificate of initial mastery. Whatever you call yours, you will want to make sure that the certificate is based on an exam and grading system that ensures that an A is an A and a B is a B, no matter where the student went to school, no matter

what the math course was named, and no matter who taught it. There's no need to tinker with the high school diploma. Leave it in place as an attendance certificate. The new achievement certificate will catch on as colleges honor it for admission and employers honor it when hiring. Work with employers and colleges in your state to make that happen.

Third, *deregulate education* as much as possible. Get your state department of education to stop setting rules for how schools should be staffed, how time should be organized, how courses should be taught, and how money should be spent. Make it your policy that funds go to schools and they decide how to spend them, as long as *they* are making good progress in getting youngsters to meet your standards. If you have a reliable exam and grading system in place, you'll know the schools are spending public money well by how students do on your exams and other assessments. You will have real public accountability but a lean and nonintrusive bureaucracy.

Fourth, *make professional development for educators a high priority.* This doesn't mean more required courses or tougher requirements at the teacher training colleges. It means instead time and support for teams of teachers to reorganize their teaching so that it is aimed clearly at the standards you have set and the assessments that will be used to judge students. Educators are in as much need of continuing education and development as are employers in any high-performance company. If you proceed with deregulation, you'll find that many schools can find funds for this essential aspect of improvement within current budgets. But some will need help. You'll have to stand ready.

These four things—standards, certificates, deregulation, and professional development—can make a huge difference in what the high school diploma in your state means.

But proceed cautiously. There is considerable confusion today about what standards are. Your state may already be in the process of setting standards; it may even have adopted a set of goals or outcomes or directed individual school districts in the state to set their own. If so, your state is on the way to reversing the cycle of low expectations and low achievement. But not everything called a standard really is one. Here are some questions you can ask to determine how far along your state really is in the process of setting commonsense standards that will work.

- *Do the standards state clearly what students are supposed to know and be able to do?* Lots of so-called standards do not. For example, "produce a variety of kinds of writing" doesn't tell you what students should be able to write. "Write a report that conveys information in an organized way" does. "Use mathematics for everyday purposes" doesn't specify what math or how it should be used. "Use decimals, fractions, ratios, and percents to analyze data from a survey" does.
- *Are the standards clearly focused on academic achievement?*—for example, in math, English, and science? This is what everyone agrees is the primary job of schools. Where there is controversy over standards—as there very likely is in your state—it is not over the basics of academic achievement. Everyone wants that for their children.
- *Do your state's standards make clear how good is "good enough"?* A standard isn't a standard until everyone knows what a really good piece of work should look like. How many books should a student read each year? What are some examples of well-done science experiments? How can you tell if a written composition really makes the grade? Statements of standards need to be accompanied by examples of student work and the criteria for grading that work. Otherwise they are just words and cannot serve as a foundation for assessments and certificates of achievement.
- *Are your standards as high as any in the nation, as any in the world?* If they're not, you are shortchanging everyone in your state, for the good jobs will go elsewhere and the smartest of your young people will leave to follow those jobs.

Richard W. Riley
U.S. Secretary of Education

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley is in the forefront of historic progress in American education. Riley's nomination in December 1992 received unequivocal support and he was unanimously confirmed a month later. Syndicated columnist David Broder wrote that "probably the best thing the President has done for education is to pick his old friend, former South Carolina Governor Richard Riley, as the secretary of education." Broder called Riley one of the "most decent and honorable people in public life."

In just two years, Secretary Riley has helped build bipartisan coalitions for six groundbreaking education initiatives—a cohesive set of programs that span kindergarten through college.

Prior to holding this position, Riley was Governor of South Carolina for two terms. He spearheaded a comprehensive and highly successful reform of that state's school system.

Riley graduated cum laude *from Furman University in 1954 and served for two years as an officer on a minesweeper in the U.S. Navy. In 1959 he received a law degree from the University of South Carolina School of Law.*

The Challenge for New Governors: Leading Education Reform in the Late 1990s

Overview

Providing a quality education for all our children is a state and local responsibility, but also a national priority. Governors have long been key leaders on education issues, and it is imperative in 1995 and beyond that Governors take responsibility for leading the charge for school improvement in their states.

In the mid-1980s, after then-Education Secretary Terrel Bell's National Commission on Excellence in Education issued the alarming report *A Nation At Risk*, many state leaders rose to the challenge and developed innovative policies and programs aimed at improving student achievement. The state education reforms of the 1980s laid the groundwork for the creation of the National Education Goals in 1990. These goals, recently formalized in law, focus on "results"—what we expect our citizens and our country to achieve by the year 2000.

An education summit, involving the nation's Governors and President George Bush, accelerated the movement toward academic standards and accountability. At the summit, the Governors asked the federal government for program flexibility and waivers in return for results. I am happy to report the federal government has delivered on that request.

The New Federal-State Partnership

Over the past two years, the Clinton administration, with bipartisan congressional support, has passed historic education legislation, including the Goals 2000: Educate America Act; the Safe Schools Act; the School-to-Work Opportunities Act; and the Improving America's Schools Act (also known as the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act). Each of these new laws builds on the lessons learned from ten years of school reforms at the state and local levels. Each focuses on providing a safe, disciplined learning environment and challenging academic and occupational standards for all children. And each provides a great deal of flexibility

to support the school improvement efforts already underway in states and communities. Each act also allows for historic waiver authority from federal rules and regulations. In addition, the Improving America's Schools Act provides support for the development and implementation of public charter schools.

Under the Goals 2000: Educate America Act and the Improving America's Schools Act, states are asked to develop challenging academic standards for students and to design or build upon comprehensive education improvement plans. These plans will link challenging standards, better student assessments, improved teacher preparation, technology, and other resources to help all children learn at higher levels. It is important that all this be accomplished with grassroots, broad-based involvement. In return, the federal government is offering funding and other support services and flexibility to help states and school districts create high-quality education and training systems. For the first time, these laws encourage states and local school districts to link and coordinate federal, state, and local reform efforts to best support student achievement.

The Governor as Education Leader: South Carolina's Experience with Reform

More than anyone in the state, the Governor is in a position to bring the diverse education stakeholders and the public together to hammer out a strategy for school improvement. New Governors can begin their education initiatives by asking a few simple questions: Who needs to be involved in the education improvement process? What are we trying to accomplish? How will we know when we have succeeded?

For example, in June 1983 when I was Governor of South Carolina, I convened two panels of state leaders and asked them to draft a bold, comprehensive education reform plan and to come up with some ideas about what education reform would cost and how to pay for it.

We involved the public, educators, parents, and community leaders: more than 50,000 South Carolinians personally attended school events or participated in seven Governor's Forums on Excellence in Education around the state. Tens of thousands of people called our reform hotline, created and staffed by volunteers from the League of Women Voters and the Parent-Teacher Association.

We described a comprehensive reform agenda to the people of South Carolina by outlining the following goals:

- improving student performance by raising academic standards;
- strengthening the teaching and testing of basic skills;
- elevating the profession of teaching;
- improving leadership, management, and efficiency;
- implementing quality control and rewarding productivity; and
- creating more effective links among schools, parents, and community and business leaders.

By the time the state legislature met to consider our proposal, education reform already had broad public support. When committees in the South Carolina House of Representatives tried to cut back funding, the public rallied, forcing legislators to pass the proposal almost intact and to enact a funding plan to pay for it.

The result was overwhelming approval for the Education Improvement Act, with full funding guaranteed. My proudest moment as Governor of South Carolina was signing that legislation into law on June 28, 1984, with more than 1,000 people looking on.

Was it worthwhile? Advanced placement enrollment increased 400 percent after 1986 . . . 97 percent of the 1991 class met exit exam standards, compared with 55 percent in 1986 . . . SAT scores increased 36 percent . . . and basic skills and attendance improved dramatically.

The Education Challenge for 1995 and Beyond

The American people are very much in a "show me" mood. They want results for their tax investment and they want to know what is being done to improve their schools. A recent report by the Public Agenda Foundation titled *First Things First: What Americans Expect from the Public Schools* shows that for the large majority of Americans, too many public schools are not providing the minimum prerequisites for education—a safe, orderly environment and effective teaching of the academic basics. We know that even many of our most advanced students are not learning what they need to know to succeed in today's competitive world economy.

This is a critical time in the history of public education. The future of our children depends, in part, on each Governor's willingness to take on the challenges of today's education system. Governors can

provide leadership by focusing on critical issues such as school safety and student achievement. Governors can encourage their states to adopt rigorous academic standards and education goals as well as a comprehensive strategy to achieve them. Governors can help bring together all the diverse stakeholders—parents, teachers, business leaders, school board members, and others—to create a vision for school improvement in their states and garner the resources to make the vision a reality.

I encourage Governors to make children and education a high priority on their agendas. As a nation, we cannot afford to leave any child behind. Our children make up 20 percent of our population, but 100 percent of our future.

Roy Romer

Governor of Colorado

Roy Romer was born in Garden City, Kansas, and grew up in Holly in southeastern Colorado. He received a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from Colorado State University and a law degree from the University of Colorado. He also studied ethics at Yale University.

A member of the U.S. Air Force, he was a military prosecutor during assignment in Germany. From 1958 to 1966, he served in the Colorado State Senate. Governor Romer returned to public service in 1975, first as Colorado's commissioner of agriculture, then as the Governor's chief of staff. He was appointed state treasurer in 1977 and later was elected to two four-year terms, from 1978 to 1986. He was inaugurated Governor in January 1987. Fascinated by flying, he opened a flying school. He also has operated a ski area and has been involved in land development. His business career later expanded into the equipment business, and he has owned and operated John Deere outlets in four states.

Governor Romer is outgoing chairman of the Education Commission of the States and a past chairman of the National Education Goals Panel, the Democratic Governors' Association, and the National Governors' Association. He is a member of the National Governors' Association Executive Committee and co-chair of NGA's Health Care Leadership Team.

Making Quality Count

Governors have an important stake in making sure that our public schools are of high quality and that they prepare each youngster with the skills and knowledge he or she will need to get a good job and be an effective citizen. The competitive success of each of our state economies—as well as the nation as a whole—depends on highly skilled, highly capable citizens.

We need nothing short of a revolution in our expectations for students and for our schools. We need to set our expectations higher, and we need to create public demand—informed, sustained, and significant—for systemwide reform of our public education system. The first step toward creating this public demand for higher expectations is to help people realize the degree to which we are falling short of the performance levels needed to secure our future.

Results Matter: The National Education Goals

In 1989 President George Bush and the nation's Governors met in Charlottesville, Virginia, for an historic Education Summit. We used the discussions at this summit to create the National Education Goals. We established these goals to serve as evidence of our commitment to improving schools as well as to guide and measure our efforts.

The goals have focused the nation and its schools on what really matters: the results we want from our schools for our kids. They accurately reflect the expectations we must have at every level of our education system: youngsters who are healthy and ready to learn, classrooms that are safe, students who stay in school and learn the skills and knowledge they will need to be successful, and adult Americans who are literate.

The National Education Goals changed the dynamic and the discussion about school reform in this country. They created an unprecedented, bipartisan consensus on school reform, and they changed the dialogue about school reform by providing the nation

with clear and commonly understood goals for the changes we needed to make.

Governors set these goals for the year 2000. The timeline is ambitious; the policies and changes we will need to pursue to reach them are dramatic. But we wanted our goals to be high. We wanted to clearly state the urgency and the sustained action we would need to make our education system into a world-class system. We wanted to be honest and express what must change in America's schools. The process was designed to educate, inspire, and motivate the public. It is like holding a mirror up to people and asking them to recognize and change what is wrong.

In setting these goals, we—as a group of fifty-five Governors and the President of the United States—committed ourselves to a decade of sustained action in each of our states and territories and at the national level in order to reach the goals. Because of our commitment to hold ourselves accountable for reaching the goals, in 1990 the Governors and the Bush administration created the National Education Goals Panel, a bipartisan mechanism for measuring the nation's progress and each state's progress in meeting the goals. Beginning in 1991, each fall the panel has released an annual report charting the nation's progress.

We wanted the goals panel's annual findings to generate public discussion and action in every community in the country. From the beginning, the Governors and the administration agreed that the indicators in the panel's annual reports should be "results-oriented"—meaning they should neither focus on how hard we are trying nor on the difficulty of the circumstances that confront us, but on whether we are succeeding or failing at what we set out to do, which is to achieve the National Education Goals. We also wanted these indicators to measure our progress against the external criteria of world-class standards of performance, not to compare states or school districts with one another.

Measuring Progress: The Need to Set Standards

Early in the deliberations of the National Education Goals Panel and in discussions among Governors on school reform, it became clear that we badly needed better ways to measure progress toward these goals—especially the goals dealing with student achievement. There was a startling absence of a national consensus about what to measure. Looking at the wording for the two goals we wrote about student achievement, for example, we needed to be more specific

about what "demonstrating competency" in core subject areas meant, and we needed to decide which evidence would measure world-class achievement in mathematics and science. We found that there was no consensus on the most important ideas and skills students should be learning.

Our society has no clear standards for what we expect every student to know and be able to do to get a high school diploma. Now I happen to be a pilot. There are certain things you need to know and be able to do to get your pilot's license. Every pilot needs to learn how to fly a plane—you can't get a pilot's license unless you've learned this skill. It may take some people twelve hours, and it may take others eighteen hours. What is fixed is what you need to know and be able to do; what is variable is how long it takes you to learn these things.

Too often, our schools reverse this: what is fixed is how long you stay in your seat and what is variable is what you learn. That model doesn't make sense, especially in a situation where we need all of our citizens to be skilled and knowledgeable.

It became clear that Governors—and the nation—needed standards against which to measure student achievement in our schools. In the world around us, standards define what it takes to know or do something well, whether it's competing in a broad jump, flying a plane, practicing medicine, or producing a safe product. Standards are oriented to quality, excellence, and proficiency, not to the lowest common denominator. They are clear, specific benchmarks against which an individual's performance and progress can be judged. In 1989 the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics released its "world-class" standards for math. These standards represented the best professional consensus about what every student should know and be able to do to be proficient in math.

Standards give schools clear targets at which they can aim and organize themselves to achieve. They define exactly what each student is expected to know and be able to do. These standards need to be clear and measurable, and we need to start expecting every student to meet them.

The concept of a standard for student performance is easy to understand. I visit hundreds of companies each year and I see the jobs employers are doing at those companies, especially those that use high-tech computer equipment or telecommunications. As a parent, I ask myself, "Is my child learning the skills and knowledge

he or she will need to get that job?" We need to examine what set of skills and knowledge it takes to get that and other jobs and think through what that means for the education process. For example, what math skills does my child need to learn? And which of these skills should he or she have mastered by the fourth grade? Eighth grade? Twelfth grade? Parents want to know whether their fourth grader is learning the math skills and knowledge he or she will need to get a good job. Standards should define what those skills and knowledge are at each step of a child's education.

Governors endorsed the idea of setting standards in core academic subject areas, using these standards to measure both the progress of individual schools and the nation's progress in meeting the National Education Goals, and holding schools accountable for achieving these results. To advance this discussion, the Governors endorsed the idea of developing voluntary "national" standards that would represent the best thinking about what students should be learning to compete with students from other countries. These national guideposts could also serve as resources for states and local school districts as they developed their own standards.

Staying the Course: Looking to the Year 2000

By working together and speaking with one voice through the National Education Goals, Governors have had a tangible impact on education reform. The goals have represented a mechanism for us to influence national and state policies to help schools change.

Focusing on results through both student performance standards and the National Education Goals has become a commonsense, logical approach to how Governors have approached the business of school reform. Our work has evolved into an extraordinary series of activities—work we carried back to our individual states and work we used to influence national policies.

For the past four years, the goals panel has published a tough-minded report documenting our nation's progress toward meeting the National Education Goals. These reports offer us the encouraging news that we are making significant progress in changing the conditions that underlie children's learning, such as infant health and immunization. At the same time, the reports portray the sobering news that at least so far, we are doing little more than holding level on measurements for student achievement, such as the numbers of African American and Hispanic students entering and completing college.

We still have much work to accomplish if we are to meet our education goals by the year 2000. Our progress remains too slow and our reforms affect too few children. We need to move aggressively and act boldly.

The first and most important step we can take is to agree on clear, high expectations for student performance in each of our schools working to reach these expectations. Several Colorado school districts have taken seriously the effort to reach the National Education Goals and to expect more from all of their students. Five years ago, those districts began a concerted effort to set standards for student performance, measure progress, and act on those results. And, across the board, student achievement is increasing in those school districts. As more states and school districts move to adopt challenging standards and corresponding assessments, I believe we will make gains across the country.

We also need to do a better job of communicating the importance of improving our public schools and what those changes mean to students. We need to speak plainly and involve more members of our communities in discussing and agreeing on expectations. Specific goals and standards will not improve our schools if they do not represent what the public expects from its local schools.

As Governors, we can offer leadership, a "bully pulpit," and sustained pressure for change. Like no one else in a state, the Governor can get citizens to pay attention, understand why schools need to change and how, and take steps to make those changes.

I believe we began an important effort in 1989 with the National Education Goals. In the business world, it is a fundamental axiom that you cannot improve quality unless you can measure it. Governors took this simple, straightforward approach when we adopted the National Education Goals.

I firmly believe that this results-oriented approach makes sense. Working together and sending the same message, Governors have helped spur progress in school reform. As we near the halfway mark toward the year 2000 (fall 1995), we need to redouble our efforts and renew our commitment to reaching our education goals.

Albert Shanker
Union President

Albert Shanker has been president of the American Federation of Teachers since 1974. He is a vice president of the AFL-CIO and chairs its International Affairs Committee. He was the founding president of Education International, a world organization of teachers' unions. He has taught in the New York City public schools and at Hunter College and the Harvard School of Education.

The Public Looks at School Reform

The recent elections have caused some big changes in Washington, D.C., and in state capitals all over the country, but the problems facing the United States have not changed. Budget deficits, decaying cities, and many more problems are there waiting for the new crop of legislators and Governors. But a piece of legislation passed by the 103rd Congress gives us a head start in solving one of our most persistent problems—the low achievement levels of American students. With the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, we have a chance to provide our students with the kind of excellent education that youngsters in many other industrialized nations take for granted: one that sets high standards for achievement with curriculums and assessments based on these standards. Although it is a federal law, Goals 2000 was written expressly to enable states to shape it to their needs, and it will succeed or fail based on how well the states do this.

Governors will be hearing some sharp criticism of Goals 2000. There are people who say it will lead to the kind of fuzzy or meaningless standards that characterize much of what is known as outcomes-based education. These critics point to "outcomes" like those calling for a youngster to "function as a responsible family member" or to "maintain physical, emotional, and social well-being." But states are free to set tough standards. Indeed, Goals 2000 encourages them to do that. And the national standards already proposed in mathematics and civics are rigorous and substantive. Other critics call Goals 2000 a federal takeover of local education, even though states are not obliged to accept national standards or participate in any way in Goals 2000 programs. These critics are vocal, but they are also relatively easy to answer. The states' own serious and concerted efforts to set standards, curriculum, and assessments based on these standards are the best guarantees of high quality.

Of greater concern are the people the Governors may not be hearing from. A recent survey by The Public Agenda Foundation, a nonpartisan citizen research group, shows that a substantial number

of parents and citizens have an education agenda with different priorities from those of most education reformers (Jean Johnson and John Immerwohr, *First Things First—What Americans Expect from the Public Schools* [New York: The Public Agenda Foundation, 1994]). They are not indifferent to raising education standards, but for them, other issues come first. If Goals 2000 or any other kind of education reform is to have a chance, Governors need to be aware of what is troubling people about the schools and, I believe, must offer them some kind of satisfaction.

What do they want? According to The Public Agenda Foundation survey, the biggest issue for the public is that "too many public schools are not providing the minimum prerequisites for education—a safe, orderly environment and effective teaching of 'the basics' " (ibid., 10). Focus groups revealed that parents were responding not merely to media coverage of violence, but to their own children's experiences. Seventy-six percent of those polled, including 83 percent of African American parents and 84 percent of white parents, support the permanent removal from school of students possessing weapons or drugs (ibid., 42).

They are also concerned about orderly schools and classrooms. "Most Americans are not convinced that schools adequately enforce the standards of behavior and cooperation that allow teachers to teach and children to learn" (ibid., 11). Eighty-eight percent say that "emphasizing habits such as being on time and being dependable and disciplined would make a great deal of difference in how much students learn." Seventy-three percent say "taking persistent troublemakers out of class would be a very effective means of boosting academic performance in the schools . . . . People see order as a prerequisite to learning" (ibid., 42).

The third major concern is that there's not enough emphasis on the basics, such as reading, writing, and math. The public is *not* saying that students shouldn't learn more than the basics or shouldn't be offered challenging courses, but there's great suspicion of reformers who look down on the basics and emphasize team skills, critical thinking, and higher order skills.

The message the public is sending is loud and clear. Higher standards and more challenging schoolwork are supported strongly, but the public doubts reformers who have all sorts of plans for "innovations" without first taking care of school safety, discipline, and teaching the basics.

The public, including both African American and white parents, also believes that "schools should hold students accountable for doing their best." Eighty-eight percent "support not allowing students to graduate from high school unless they demonstrate they can write and speak English well," and 82 percent support setting up "very clear guidelines on what students should learn and what teachers should teach in every major subject" (ibid., 15).

These views do not reflect a desire to return to the "good old days." Americans favor making learning enjoyable and reject spanking. But they're wary of some of the new methods proposed by reformers, such as allowing students to use calculators before they can add, subtract, multiply, and divide mentally or to write compositions without paying attention to spelling and grammar.

Another big difference between the public and most education reformers is that only 34 percent of Americans believe that heterogeneous grouping helps students learn. Even when presented with arguments in favor of it, most remain unconvinced. Opposition to heterogeneous grouping is as great among African American parents as among white parents.

Although education experts say tracking is bad because students in low tracks are stigmatized and rarely challenged, the public views it differently. Seventy-two percent believe that in heterogeneous classes, teachers spend the most time and effort on the fastest and slowest learners; they see tracking as "the way for average learners to get just as much attention as the fastest and slowest learners" (ibid., 19).

When The Public Agenda Foundation probed this issue in previous research, it found that "people's doubts about heterogeneous grouping also stem from their own experiences in school or at the workplace. People recalled incidents when they suffered from being in a class that was too advanced for them, or when they watched someone else fall further and further behind because his skills were just not equal to those of the rest of the class. People often cited differences in the needs of their own children as arguments in favor of grouping students by skill level and tailoring teaching to their level of advancement. In short, heterogeneous grouping makes no intuitive sense to people and seems to fly in the face of their real-world experiences" (ibid., 19).

Goals 2000 is an ambitious and important piece of legislation that could help the United States turn the corner in making our education system what it should be. Governors should support it strongly.

They also need to be aware of the changes in the education system that a majority of citizens put first. Unless Governors make these changes part of their agenda, Goals 2000 will not get the credibility and public support it needs. Given the basic and commonsense nature of what the public apparently wants, it would be hard to argue against this agenda as a necessary first step to any reform.

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Leila Sinclaire
Tenth Grade Student

Leila Sinclaire is a sophomore at Walnut Hills High School in Cincinnati, Ohio, where her favorite subjects are English and art history. She has never received less than an A on a report card. She loves to think, to learn, to read, and to express herself through acting and writing poetry. She is an active runner and a rower; in summer 1994, her boat competed in the national championships in Indianapolis. She volunteers her time to "make a difference in the community and the world." Her most recent projects include fasting to raise money for world hunger, studying sign language to communicate better with the deaf, and renovating old buildings for the homeless. Her love of the outdoors has taken her on a wilderness expedition in the canyons, rivers, and mountains of Colorado and Utah. She has also worked with the U.S. Forest Service to make a campsite in Colorado completely accessible to the handicapped.

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Up the Down Staircase

The teacher is the sculptor and I am the clay. She shapes me, defines my details, and gently curves and skillfully embellishes my form. With a loving hand, she lifts me to boundless heights, to the apex of my hidden potential. I am released from narrow-mindedness and set free in a world of creativity and imagination. I am treated not as a void to fill with useless trivia, but as a living, breathing being possessing the will to learn, the need to learn, and the sincere love of learning. The teacher is never discouraged by my vacant gazes or cloudy eyes; she always manages to bring the raw interest and enthusiasm to the surface. I am certain that the school system will not cave in on me; as a benefactor, my teacher helps me maintain my individuality among a sea of blank identification numbers. She accomplishes all this not with magic but with her own passion for teaching, all this without leaving the classroom, and all this because of her unselfish desire to get her students thinking.

Thinking, dreaming, sharing, discussing, and creating is what she insists upon; she despises memorization and recitation and mindless regurgitation. She shuns the didactic, pulls us from our desks, and gets us moving, touching, tasting, and talking. We communicate our thoughts, fears, hopes, and dreams in an atmosphere that is never intimidating, never limiting or cruel. She is never a bully, always a friend, responsible when she needs to be, and foolish when appropriate. Unlike any teacher in the past, she excites us and introduces us to tales of deceit, intrigue, jealousy, and scandal that before had been pages of nonsense. With outstanding grace and efficiency, she shows us how sleep equates with death, grapes become wrath, a conch shell represents power, and a pearl denotes greed in the work of figurative language. We begin to envision the strength of Odysseus, the passion of Romeo, the isolation of Boo Radley, and they suddenly are real, dynamic, and struggling, just as we are. She steers away from plot, gently peeling away layer after layer of meaning until underlying and universal truths are exposed. Suddenly, themes concerning desperation, corruption, and sacrifice seem less

distant. She encourages us to become above average, to impress our parents, our peers, our future bosses with our ability and understanding of human nature. She offers questions with no answers, knowing that is what is best, knowing that is what will guarantee our success. She gives us lists of books to read, literature in which to immerse ourselves, classics that we are expected to understand and fully appreciate, dramas, histories, poems, sonnets. She always says that ignorance is the perpetual detention served by the uneducated, and I believe her zealously. But what really sets her apart from the other teachers of mediocrity is her endless devotion, her enduring quest to give us the confidence and knowledge that makes our future golden.

My only regret is that she is the exception, the supermodel. Her workplace is most discouraging and dismal when it should be full of joy and inspiration; unfortunately, it offers no support for her efforts. Surrounded by an atmosphere of decay and hopelessness, by broken windows and cracked paint, all creativity is too easily extinguished. A skyscraper with an elegant lobby and a smiling doorman towers above our run-down building with crowded hallways and tired security. Teachers need extreme determination and tolerance to work against the odds, to ignore the flickering lights and conjure up an artificial haven of enlightenment for seven hours each day. They must be exceedingly strong and unconquerable in spirit to survive the disappointments of today's school system. So it upsets me to see that the respect given to doctors and lawyers, who care for the sick and the wronged, is not carried over to teachers, who care for the healthy, the ambitious, and the open-minded. Teaching should be an honor, a goal, an area of intense study, not a second-choice major for college students who have nothing better to do. The world of education needs to be a focus; it deserves total equality with its corporate counterpart. Baseball players are entertaining and executives look very nice in their suits, but the teacher gives the greatest possible gift; she deserves the greatest of rewards.

The teacher is the foundation; without her we will fall. She is everywhere, but she is hidden in fear. Her enemy is the school system; it does not appreciate or protect her. The day it realizes her worth is the day we will all shine. She believes it will come, and therefore so do I. It is true that in my maturity I will not remember the exact definition of "exposition" or "denouement," but I will remember my teacher's face. I will remember the way she smiled when we had done well, and I will know why the caged bird sings.

Deborah Wadsworth

Public Opinion Analyst

Deborah Wadsworth is vice president and executive director of The Public Agenda Foundation, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works to enhance citizen understanding of complex public policy issues.

A former college administrator, Wadsworth was part of a group of educators brought together in the late sixties by then-Governor of New York Nelson Rockefeller to plan and develop a new college within the State University of New York, the College of Purchase. Through the seventies, she served the college as its dean of admissions, developing a national student body for both its College of Letters and Science and its professional School of the Arts.

More recently, she served as a program officer of the John and Mary R. Markle Foundation, with special responsibility for projects that focused on the impact of mass communications on the political process. Immediately prior to joining The Public Agenda Foundation, Wadsworth was the executive director of the Smart Family Foundation, where she developed a program to attract exceptional graduates of liberal arts institutions to the profession of teaching.

Listening as a School Reform Strategy

Governors, like Presidents, lead from a bully pulpit. Those who lead effectively use that pulpit to inform, educate, and persuade. Those who become true agents of change frequently step down from that pulpit to hear what the people are saying.

There are few subjects about which people have more to say than education reform. Unfortunately, leaders do not always listen, so reform successes are hard to find today. There's great irony here, for education reform is one of the few public policy issues about which America's leaders have reached a high degree of consensus. And Governors have played a leading role.

From the Education Summit in Charlottesville, through subsequent iterations of the national goals, through Republican and Democratic presidencies, through creation of the National Education Goals Panel to measure progress, through the addition of two more goals, through the enactment of national legislation—through it all, there has remained significant agreement about the reform agenda among Governors, Presidents, business leaders, and influential education experts.

The resulting strategy—underway in more than thirty states—has centered on higher academic standards and more challenging assessments that require children to demonstrate command of a subject and use their knowledge to solve real-world problems.

Research continues to identify strong support among Americans for raising academic standards and expectations and for clarifying what students should know and what teachers should teach. But in most cases, actual support for reform is modest at best, and frequently there is outright opposition.

National and state studies conducted by The Public Agenda Foundation over the past four years, the latest in the fall of 1994, reveal a series of disconnects between the leadership agenda and the views of the public. Theses differences explain much of the public's

resistance to school reform. Unless the public's concerns are addressed, all of our progress and all of the hard work by Governors and others will have been for naught.

Although the public supports higher standards, its primary interest—bordering on obsession—lies in the creation of a safe and orderly learning environment and in teaching kids the basics.

It's difficult to overstate the force of public sentiment on this issue. Almost nine in ten Americans believe that dependability and discipline make a great deal of difference in how students learn, while only about half believe that learning will improve by, for example, replacing multiple-choice tests with essay tests. Three quarters of the population support the permanent removal from school of students who are caught with weapons or drugs and the removal of persistent troublemakers from the classroom.

The public is also suspicious of new teaching techniques, which they regard as "fuzzy" and experimental at the expense of the basics. People strongly believe that children should learn grammar and spelling before creative writing and that they should learn to add, subtract, multiply, and divide before learning how computers and calculators can do it for them.

It's not that people oppose "higher order thinking skills"; rather, people wonder how schools can focus on that objective when they see high school students who can't make change or name the capital of New York. They also worry about classroom "fads," which their intuition tells them won't work, and they doubt that schools can improve unless parents do their jobs better.

It's easy to understand why safety, discipline, and the basics are strongly supported by the public, but these issues seldom show up on leaders' reform agendas, which are more likely to concentrate on site-based management, authentic assessment, heterogeneous grouping, and so forth. Our experience suggests that this dichotomy is a prescription for failure.

Whether appropriate or not, there are some policy issues for which the public is content to delegate the right of thoughtful deliberation to the nation's leaders. Examples include instances of foreign policy and some scientific and technological issues. However, perhaps because almost every citizen feels that he or she knows something about education, school reform is one public policy issue that the public is not about to delegate.

As a consequence, advocacy campaigns to rally support behind leadership solutions not only may prove ineffective, but may even cause a backlash that actually retards progress. Media can effectively raise the public's consciousness, and leaders can formulate policy choices and help people find common ground. But the public itself must understand those choices and their consequences.

It seems clear in reviewing the current state of school reform that Governors and other leaders must accept the fact that whether they agree with the public's views is beside the point. These views are strongly held by the people who pay the taxes, pass or defeat the referenda, and elect members of schools boards and state legislatures. If we want to improve our schools, we must take their views into account.

Education reformers who are wise enough to pay attention can respond to the public and help people work through this issue in a variety of ways. Any one of these responses, or a combination, could be appropriate in any particular situation.

One option is to decide that the public's concerns require genuine change in the leadership agenda, which might mean expanding that agenda to incorporate such items as safety and discipline. It might mean a more overt emphasis on basics and possibly reexamining or delaying some of the more unproved teaching techniques until the foundation has been laid and the public is more receptive.

Another option is for leaders to determine—after an honest and candid self-appraisal—that the public's views stem from misunderstanding and try to respond with better, more effective communications that correct those misperceptions. That doesn't mean a new slogan or marginal repackaging; as already indicated, that approach has been tried and found wanting. It means genuine, thoughtful, and ongoing communications within communities that acknowledge and address the public's concerns and priorities.

If the first approach isn't acceptable and the second approach doesn't work, leaders could conclude that the public's point of view is in whole or in part mistaken. That conclusion requires the exercise of true leadership—the slow, exacting process of building a constituency for ideas that are worthwhile but not popular. Historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. aptly described democracy as "a system based on debate, persuasion and consent" and politics in a democracy as ultimately "an educational enterprise, an effort to change people's minds." This is the most difficult path but the only honest

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one if leaders conclude that their approach, not the public's, is the one that will best help children and their families.

We at The Public Agenda Foundation believe education reform is an appropriate and essential issue for public debate. We present this research in the hope that Governors and other reform leaders will read it carefully, thoughtfully, and objectively in an honest effort to understand what the public is saying.

Is the public right or wrong? Perceptive or wrongheaded? Whatever one concludes, and whichever course of action is adopted, the public's perceptions should not be dismissed lightly. Reformers must listen to and respect what the public is saying. Change will not occur until the public becomes an equal and valued partner.

Raul Yzaguirre

Advocacy Group President

For more than thirty-five years, Raul Yzaguirre has been a key national player on behalf of Hispanic Americans. Today he is president of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR)—the largest constituency-based national Hispanic organization and leading Hispanic "think tank" in Washington, D.C.

Yzaguirre began his civil rights career at the age of fifteen when he organized the American G.I. Forum Juniors, an auxiliary of the American G.I. Forum, an Hispanic veterans' organization. Yzaguirre served four years in the U.S. Air Force Medical Corps. In 1964 he founded NOMAS, the National Organization for Mexican American Services. A proposal he wrote for NOMAS led to the creation of what is now NCLR. In 1969 Yzaguirre founded Interstate Research Associates (IRA), the first Mexican-American research association, which he built into a multimillion-dollar, nonprofit consulting firm.

From 1989 to 1990, he served as one of the first Hispanic fellows of the Institute of Politics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. In 1993 Yzaguirre received the Order of the Aztec Eagle, the highest honor given by the government of Mexico to noncitizens. He is also the recipient of the Martin Luther King Jr. Medallion in recognition of his contribution to civil and human rights.

In Our Nation's Best Interest: Achieving Educational Excellence for Latinos

These are unprecedented times, and you will all be challenged over the years to set the course for your states and for the future of this country. As a civil rights leader and a member of one of the nation's fastest-growing minority populations, Hispanic Americans, I would like to share my perspective.[1]

Overview and Status

As the nation's largest Hispanic constituency-based organization, the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) has long been involved in education issues, both at the national and local levels.[2] Our nation's Latino community has always counted education among its major priorities. NCLR has worked diligently to ensure that policymakers understand that, as far as the Latino community is concerned, education is truly a nonpartisan issue. We work closely and well with members of Congress who come from all points on the political spectrum. Over the years, I have met with the last eight secretaries of education, every one since the creation of the U.S. Department of Education. I have consistently argued that improving educational opportunities for our nation's Latino community is not merely a self-serving goal—it is a critical issue for the success of the entire nation.

According to U.S. Census Bureau projections, by 2007, Latinos will be the largest ethnic "minority" group in the country. Because of their youthfulness and rapid population growth, Latinos will account for more than one quarter (27 percent) of new entrants into the labor force from 1988 through 2000, compared with 47 percent for whites, 16 percent for blacks, and 10 percent for Asians and

[1] The terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably to refer to persons in the United States who are of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Central or South American, Cuban, or other Spanish or Latin American descent.

[2] The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) was established in 1968. NCLR is the nation's largest constituency-based Hispanic organization, representing more than 180 community-based "affiliates" that together provide services to more than 2 million Latinos across the country annually.

other workers. However, current statistics show that only 55 percent of Latino youth between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four have received a high school diploma, compared with 75 percent of black youth and 82 percent of white youth. In fact, the 1991 report on the President's national education objectives shows that between 1975 and 1990, Hispanic high school graduation rates actually *decreased*, while rates for whites and blacks increased substantially. In addition, fewer than one in ten Hispanics above the age of twenty-five (9.3 percent) have completed a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with more than one in five non-Hispanics (22.3 percent).

Although they have the highest labor force participation rates of any major worker group, low educational attainment severely limits the contributions that Hispanics can make to the nation's economy. Failure to complete high school is highly correlated with low income, high unemployment, and poverty; *Workforce 2000* estimates that of the new jobs created between 1984 and 2000, only one in seven will require less than a high school diploma. Improving the educational success of Latino youth and adults will thus have a direct impact on the future competitiveness of your states and the nation as a whole. I am mindful of the role that you, as Governors, will play to reform our education system, which is why I would like to challenge you to provide a quality education for all students.

Goals 2000 and Education Reform

Watching the debate on education reform and the implementation of the Goals 2000 legislation, I am troubled by the paradox that seems to be evoked by those who question the higher standards promoted by Goals 2000. As one of the civil rights organizations that raised cautions about the use of high-stakes assessments and testing, NCLR was careful not to cast doubt on the value of espousing high standards for all students. Instead, we wanted to ensure that all students, including those who might be more difficult to teach through conventional methods or those who might be more likely to score poorly on standardized tests, were given the opportunity to reach the high standards fittingly proposed by the National Governors' Association five years ago.

I am living proof of the "tyranny" of low expectations that U.S. Secretary of Education (and former Governor) Richard W. Riley often mentions. I am deeply concerned that this tyranny still counts our nation's Latino children as its victims. More than thirty-five years ago, when I was a high school student in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, counselors and teachers had low expectations for me;

they encouraged me to take "shop" or "mechanics" courses, despite my high test scores. Yet I was able to increase my education through the Armed Services, and eventually I received a degree from The George Washington University. I remain convinced that my path would have been far different, and far less rewarding, had I not believed in myself enough to dismiss the advice of a large number of so-called education experts.

This experience alternately guides and haunts me as I continue to advocate for the students and parents who are least likely to speak up for themselves. The sad fact remains that, statistically speaking, schools in the United States could reach the lofty aims of Goals 2000 while doing nothing to narrow the gap in achievement between minority students and white students. This statistical "accomplishment" could be achieved by channeling limited-English-proficient students into special education programs; by using biased assessment tools; or by simply pushing certain students, including Latinos, out of the classroom. Without a sincere commitment to equity in education for Hispanics and other minorities, achieving true excellence is impossible. As Governors, I hope you share this belief and act on it.

Education Reform and Community-Based Organizations

One often untapped resource in the drive toward educational excellence and equity, especially for Latinos, is community-based organizations (CBOs). For decades, Latinos have relied on alternative institutions to meet the needs of their communities because of the unresponsiveness of mainstream service providers. As schools face increasing expectations and a greater need for partnerships to address the demands brought about by changing economic conditions and family structures, Hispanic CBOs can be logical partners for the schools and for the states. Because CBOs often have scant funding and varying demands, they can benefit schools greatly, maximize the effectiveness of their education programs, and reach a broader audience when they are paired with a national or regional technical assistance provider and when they are given the opportunity to help develop and implement an education reform agenda.

These organizations can provide some of the family support services and parent involvement activities that schools are often unable to offer, especially in poor communities. Moreover, NCLR's work with Hispanic CBOs has shown that they also provide effective supplemental and alternative education programs for children and adult education for families. For example, NCLR's Center for

Community Educational Excellence (C^2E^2) houses initiatives designed to develop, evaluate, and disseminate effective community-based educational models, such as Project EXCEL (Excellence in Community Educational Leadership), EXCEL-MAS (Math and Science), and Project PRISM (a joint project with the National Urban League and others to increase parent information about and involvement in math and science education). These models have successfully provided increased educational opportunities for Latino youth and their families.

In conclusion, if there is one critical piece of information that I would like to convey, it is this: Unless extraordinary attention is paid to increasing the attainment levels of distinct groups of students—including Latinos—a high-quality education will remain outside of their reach. Key players in the education reform debate in your respective states must have strong links to the community and, in many cases, Hispanic CBOs are most qualified to fill that role. I urge all of you to make the attainment of educational excellence for all students and their families a priority as part of your overall agenda for your states. For it is only in strengthening the many diverse components of our country that we can create a stronger whole.

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